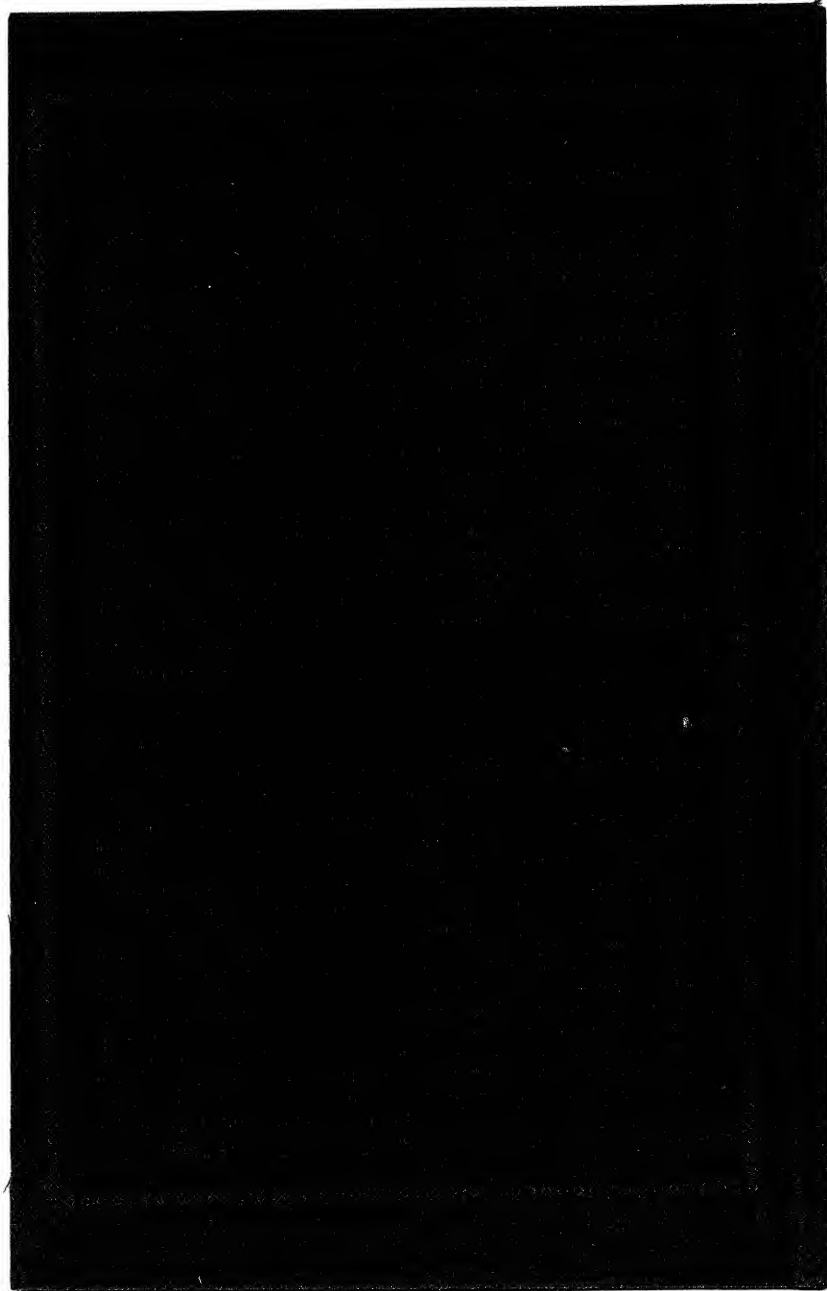


**Totem Pole  
Playhouse**



# THE FIRST YEAR

A COMIC TRAGEDY OF MARRIED LIFE

BY  
FRANK CRAVEN

*Dated  
Could only be done now  
as a period piece  
20'  
Show it better*

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The following is a copy of the playbill of the first performance of "The First Year," at the Little Theatre, New York City, N. Y.:

JOHN GOLDEN

*presents*

"THE FIRST YEAR"

*A Comic Tragedy of Married Life*

By FRANK CRAVEN

Staged under the direction of WINCHELL SMITH

Produced at the Little Theatre, New York City,  
on October 20th, 1920.

THE CAST

<i>Roberta Arnold</i> .....	GRACE LIVINGSTON
<i>William Sampson</i> .....	MR. LIVINGSTON
<i>Maude Granger</i> .....	MRS. LIVINGSTON
<i>Tim Murphy</i> .....	DR. ANDERSON
<i>Lyster Chambers</i> .....	DICK LORING
<i>Frank Craven</i> .....	THOMAS TUCKER
<i>Leila Bennett</i> .....	HATTIE
<i>Hale Norcross</i> .....	MR. BARSTOW
<i>Merceita Esmonde</i> .....	MRS. BARSTOW

ACT I. Training Quarters—at the Livingston Home,  
Reading, Ill.

(Towards the end of Act I the lights will be  
lowered to indicate a lapse of a few hours.)

ACT II. The Ringside—at Tommy's Apartment, Joplin,  
Mo.

ACT III. The Knockout—at the Livingston Home.

EXECUTIVE STAFF FOR MR. GOLDEN:

William M. Goddard.....	Manager
J. C. Drum .....	Press Representative
P. E. McCoy .....	General Stage Director
George Wright, Jr. ....	Stage Manager
Everett Annett .....	Chief Electrician
Joseph Hughes .....	Master of Properties

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## CHARACTERS

*In the order of their appearance.*

	FRED LIVINGSTON — <i>Leon</i>
	MRS. FRED LIVINGSTON — <i>Ruth N.</i>
	<u>GRACE LIVINGSTON</u> — <i>ingenue</i>
	DR. MYRON ANDERSON — <i>Russ W.</i>
<i>I &amp; II</i>	— DICK LORING, JR. — <i>Shelton.</i>
	<u>THOMAS TUCKER</u> — <i>Doug.</i>
	— "HATTIE" — <i>colored.</i>
<i>2nd</i>	— PETER BARSTOW — <i>Ben Stone</i>
<i>Act only</i>	— MRS. PETER BARSTOW — <i>Pam</i>

ACT I. *Training Quarters—at the Livingston Home, Reading, Ill. (Darkness in Act I to denote lapse of time.)*

ACT II. *The Ringside—at Tommy's apartment, Joplin, Mo.*

ACT III. *The Knockout—at the Livingston Home.*

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# THE FIRST YEAR

## *Home of the Livingstons.*

*A comfortable sitting-room, such as may be found in any Middle-Western suburban home. Entrance into the room from the hall, is a small archway R. of C. Back of this archway, which is curtained in any quiet chintz, is the hall. Stairs run from C. off to L., and back of the stairway is a hat-rack and umbrella stand. There is a small opening. Down R. there is a window, looking out on to a porch, with a small settee under it. R.U. there is a French window which also leads out on to the porch, and between the window and door is an old desk, a hideaway for papers, books, etc. On top of the desk is a hand hall light. Between the arch C. and the porch door is a writing desk of more modern manufacture.*

*L. of C. is an old-fashioned wall telephone, with a local telephone book suspended from the hook. A fireplace C., with andirons and fender and a mantel. Over the mantel is a large oil painting of a probable ancestor. Just R. of the fireplace is a small ash-stand and cigar cutter. Large easy chair in front of fire-place, and on the mantel a couple of medical journals or pamphlets. L. of mantel is a book-case of about three or four shelves high, curtained, with magazines strewn on top. Against the wall L. stands an upright piano, upon which is a long*

panel looking-glass. Against the piano and below it is a stand for bric-a-brac.

A door down L. leads to the dining-room. L.C. is a small oval marble-topped table with a vase of flowers and couple of books, and below it a settee. A rocking chair with side pockets is almost C. R. of it another easy chair and a hassock. R. a Davenport, flanked by a long monk's table, with a lamp and a flat marble match safe, an ash tray and a humidior and tobacco jar.

Through the doors of the porch R. there is a glimpse of the balustrade, and the drop beyond shows the street of the town, lined with elm or maple trees.

The walls are hung with one or two good pictures and a couple of oil paintings of ancestors. The room is lighted with electric lights set in old-fashioned brackets; these are controlled by a push-button just R. of the C. opening.

It is about 8.15 on a June night and the lights are on in the house. The lighting outside is bright moonlight.

AT RISE: MR. and MRS. LIVINGSTON and GRACE discovered.

LIVINGSTON is stretched comfortably in an arm chair standing at L. of long table R., reading the local paper and smoking his pipe.

MRS. LIVINGSTON is seated near him on his L., knitting.

GRACE is at the piano up L., playing some sentimental bit of music very quietly. As she finishes, her hands come down on the keys as though she was glad the tune was ended. She rises and glances through the music on the top of the piano.

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*Telephone rings, three short, sharp rings, then repeated.*

LIVINGSTON. (*Looks inquiringly at Mrs. Livingston*) Eh?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. No, that's ring three—Mrs. Park's number.

LIVINGSTON. Oh! (*He resumes his reading. Pause. Then without looking up.*) What are we paying for eggs now?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Fifty-eight.

LIVINGSTON. (*Turns his head half way*) Huh?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Fifty-eight.

LIVINGSTON. Gosh! I can remember when you could get them for eighteen.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. It's terrible! (*Goes on with her knitting. Livingston resumes his reading. In the distance comes a call of a girl's voice, a signal to Grace. It sounds like ooo-oo, oo-oooo-oo. Grace turns and starts slowly to the door leading to porch. As she is half way there the call is repeated, and as it finishes she opens the doors. She stands just outside the room and calls off.*)

GRACE. Oh, hello, Lou!

LOU. (*Off stage*) Hello, Grace. Helen and I won't be over tonight.

GRACE. You won't—why not?

LOU. The Camerons are calling and mama wants us to stay home.

GRACE. Oh, I'm awfully sorry.

LOU. So am I!

GRACE. Well, make it tomorrow night.

LOU. All right!

GRACE. Good night, Lou.

LOU. Good night.

GRACE. Good night, Helen. (*She enters from balcony, sees her mother's inquiring look.*) It was

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Helen and Lou Ford. The Camerons are calling on them tonight, so they can't come over here.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. That's too bad, dear.

GRACE. I'm just as well pleased. (*GRACE crosses L. to bookcase, then turns to table and looks for a book she wants.*)

LIVINGSTON. (*Realizes there has been conversation he has missed, and looks over his paper to MRS. LIVINGSTON*) Eh—what is it?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. The Ford girls, dear.

LIVINGSTON. What about them?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. The Camerons are calling on them, so they won't be able to come over tonight.

LIVINGSTON. Oh! (*Resuming his paper.*)

GRACE. Did you see my library book, mother?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. In your case, dear, in the drawer I put it. (*GRACE crosses to music cabinet R., finds the book and crosses down R. to window seat to read.*)

(*DR. MYRON ANDERSON enters down stairway. He stops in the doorway blinking a moment, until his eyes become accustomed to the lights.*)

DOCTOR. (*In door up c.*) Any message for me, sister?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Not a thing, Myron. (*DOCTOR comes down to back of table.*) Get any rest?

DOCTOR. (*Gets cigar from box back of table R., lights it*) I think I must have dozed off. (*Crosses down R. to front of table.*) What time is it?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Consulting small watch which she has pinned on her breast*) Quarter past eight.

DOCTOR. Well, then, I must have had about an hour's sleep. (*Sits on stool front of table, and writes in a pocket notebook.* GRACE, finding the

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*light bad at the window, throws herself on sofa R. of table R.)*

MRS. LIVINGSTON. You need it, Myron—you've been trying to do too much lately.

DOCTOR. Well, there's a lot of sickness around just now.

LIVINGSTON. *(Reading without looking up)* Jim Powell is sick.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Is he—Jim Powell? What is it, Myron?

DOCTOR. Stomach!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Serious?

DOCTOR. *(Puts book in pocket, turns)* No!

LIVINGSTON. *(Looking up)* Eh, what is it?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Stomach, Myron says.

LIVINGSTON. Serious?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. No, dear.

LIVINGSTON. Oh!

DOCTOR. *(Turns to GRACE, and as though he was now fully awake, asks in a livelier key)* Where are all the boys tonight, Grace?

GRACE. I don't know, Uncle.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. They'll be here, I guess.

GRACE. I don't expect anyone.

DOCTOR. You won't be surprised, though, if three or four show up, I suppose? *(GRACE gives a little laugh.)*

LIVINGSTON. Young Dick Loring is leaving town, Grace.

GRACE. Yes, I know.

LIVINGSTON. Huh? *(Turning to MRS. LIVINGSTON.)*

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Grace knows about it, dear, but it's the first I've heard. What does it say?

LIVINGSTON. Huh?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Read it.

LIVINGSTON. *(Reading from paper. As he gets into it GRACE puts down her book and listens)*

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"Friends of Richard A. Loring will be pleased to hear of his association with the Central Pacific Railroad as a construction engineer. While they will regret his departure from town, they will be anxious to see him succeed in his chosen profession. We understand from Richard that he is to receive a fine remuneration."

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, thank goodness, I have a daughter and not a son!

DOCTOR. Wouldn't you like to have a son, too, sister?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. No. Boys grow up and leave home.

DOCTOR. Well, girls do, too.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Laughing confidently*) My girl won't, will you, Grace?

GRACE. I haven't decided yet, mother.

DOCTOR. You won't have much chance to leave home, though, if you don't hurry up and grab one of these boys. (*Puts his hand on GRACE's shoulder.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Don't get that notion in her head, Myron. There's no need for her to hurry—she's young yet.

GRACE. I'm twenty.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I wasn't married until I was more than that.

DOCTOR. Well, there was a reason in your case, sister. The town we lived in was so small it was hard for any young fellow to find it.

LIVINGSTON. (*To DOCTOR*) Eh—what's that—what's hard to find?

DOCTOR. (*With good natured firmness*) I am not going all over that again.

LIVINGSTON. (*To MRS. LIVINGSTON*) What is it?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. We were talking about sons and daughters, Fred, and saying how much more likely a boy is to leave home than a girl.

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LIVINGSTON. Oh! (*Goes back to paper.*)

DOCTOR. (*Takes arm away*) You wouldn't be able to get Jim Powell to agree with you, sister! He has three sons who are patermaniacs.

GRACE. What are patermaniacs?

DOCTOR. They love their father so much they won't leave him even to go to work.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, of course, if I had a son he probably wouldn't be like Jim Powell's. He'd be going off to be a soldier or sailor or something to shorten my days. No, I'm satisfied I have a girl, and I'm more satisfied to have her stay where she is.

DOCTOR. (*Rises, goes up c. to mantel, gets strip of paper from medical journal, patches his cigar*) You mothers are all alike. You don't want to lose them, and yet your great ambition is to see them married and in a home of their own.

LIVINGSTON. (*Watching the DOCTOR go up*) Eh, what's it all about? Who's going to get married?

GRACE. (*Shutting her book with plenty of decision*) I am! (*They all turn and look at GRACE.*)

LIVINGSTON. Huh?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Grace!

GRACE. (*Embarrassed for a moment, then recovering herself*) Well, I hope I am! (*DOCTOR sits in arm-chair up c. at fireplace, reads Medical Journal.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Relieved*) Oh!

GRACE. And when I do—I mean, if I do, I've got it all planned. (*Gets up and kneels on sofa.*) I'd just have a very quiet wedding, and then I'd have a honeymoon—some place—(*dreamily*)—it doesn't matter much where you go on your honeymoon. And then I'd want a home of my own, but the last place I'd want it is here in Reading!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Reproachfully*) You mean you'd want to go away—where you wouldn't be near me?

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GRACE. Why not? You did. (*Puts book on table, goes R. to door.*)

DOCTOR. That's what she did, Grace.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. It was different in my case.

GRACE. Why was it?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. We didn't have much money in our family. And I know very well my father was glad to get rid of me.

LIVINGSTON. I was always popular with your father. I never quite realized why until you told me. (*Resumes reading.* MRS. LIVINGSTON *puts knitting in L. side pocket of chair.*)

DOCTOR. (*Coming down L. side of MRS. LIVINGSTON*) Sister, what would you do if Grace told you—without any warning—that's the way you told mother—that she and Dick Loring were to be married and were leaving for the West?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Looks at DOCTOR; rises and crosses to GRACE*) Grace, you don't mean to tell me you have any such plan?

DOCTOR. (*Crosses back of table between them at R.*) Grace isn't telling you at all, sister—I was asking you what you'd do in case she told you; would it upset you?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. You know it would.

DOCTOR. You see what a commotion it is going to cause sometime, Grace. I'd hate to be the one to ask your mother's consent. I haven't the slightest idea what Grace's plans are, sister, I was just wondering what you'd say. (*As he crosses back to his seat at the fireside. Sits.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, then, you shouldn't say those things to me, Myron. I thought Grace had really something to confess.

GRACE. Confess! Why, marrying isn't a crime, is it?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. There isn't any truth in it, is there, Grace?

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GRACE. I tell you what you do, mother, you answer uncle's question first. I'd like to know what you'd say!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I'll not answer any such thing—I don't even want to think of it! (*Crosses up back of table and back to her chair.*)

GRACE. Well, you don't want me to be an old maid, do you? (*Sits on sofa R.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I wouldn't care if you were. (*Sits C., gets out knitting.*) Your father is able to support you. And anyway, Dick Loring is the last boy I'd want to see you married to! He's always been a wild, straying sort—he wouldn't be my choice.

GRACE. Well, I don't know that father would have been mine.

LIVINGSTON. Huh?

GRACE. Well, not from the tintypes I've seen of you, Dad.

LIVINGSTON. Why, what's the matter with them?

GRACE. Well, you dress better now than you did then, I'll say that for you. (*Crosses back of table between MR. and MRS. LIVINGSTON.*) Being an old maid might suit you, mother, but it's never been my idea. I don't want father to go on supporting me all my life.

LIVINGSTON. Me either.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. You want to work for your living?

GRACE. Not one little bit. I want to be supported, and I want to be a help to the man who supports me, and I want to have children, and plan futures and arrange marriages for them—(*Crosses back of MRS. LIVINGSTON to L. of her*)—brave, handsome men for my girls, and beautiful, good women for my boys!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Grace, do be modest!

DOCTOR. (*Rises, puts magazine on mantel, crosses down to GRACE*) You go right ahead, Grace, and

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have children—have plenty of them. (*Embraces her.*) There is less danger of spoiling them then.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I don't know what you are trying to get at, Myron, but if it's to upset me, you are doing very well. (*GRACE goes up to piano stool and sits.*)

DOCTOR. I am not trying to upset you, sister. You are not a bit different from any other mother. You worry about Grace all you want, but when the time comes for her to make a choice, let her follow her own dictates, and then—go on worrying about her just the same. (*DOCTOR sits on settee L.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Looks at DOCTOR, then at GRACE.*) Well, if Grace met some nice boy I wouldn't object to her marrying, if she'd settle down here. It would be much better for Grace anyway. She'd be where I could keep her company and watch over her and advise her.

GRACE. But where would be the adventure—the romance?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Oh, you want romance, now?

GRACE. I always have!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, you won't get much with eight or ten children. (*GRACE puts book on table L.*) Why, Myron, Grace isn't even old enough to make up her mind what she wants.

DOCTOR. Of course not.

GRACE. (*Comes down L., sits L. of DOCTOR.*) You think I am not?

DOCTOR. Gracie, I know you are not. Even after you're married, you will not have your mind made up fully.

GRACE. Oh, you are joking now!

DOCTOR. Am I? Ask your mother when she finally made up her mind about your father.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. What about him?

DOCTOR. Well—that you had made a good selection.

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MRS. LIVINGSTON. I always thought so.

DOCTOR. No, you didn't! (*Rises.*) I know—(*Counts on his fingers*)—three times when you were positive you had made a big mistake—(*rises, goes to her*)—and one time you were on the point of separating.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. No! (*GRACE looks back of MRS. LIVINGSTON to MR. LIVINGSTON.*)

DOCTOR. Don't tell me that, I know! Am I right or wrong, Fred? (*Going back of MRS. LIVINGSTON to LIVINGSTON.*)

LIVINGSTON. (*Turns to them, asks MRS. LIVINGSTON*) Eh; what's that?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Myron says that when we were first married we were on the point of separating.

LIVINGSTON. Oh—well, why recall it?

DOCTOR. I am trying to prove something.

LIVINGSTON. Well, there was a time when it did look as though we'd never get through the summer.

DOCTOR. (*Crosses to C.*) I should say it did!

GRACE. (*Incredulously*) Not those two?

DOCTOR. (*Crosses to GRACE*) Even those two.

GRACE. I can't believe it!

DOCTOR. And I'll bet your mother can't tell you the reason now—doesn't remember!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Yes, I do, perfectly.

GRACE. (*Rising and crossing to her mother*) What was it? (*DOCTOR crosses down L.C.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Trying to evade an answer*) Just a foolish thing—if I'd have had a little more sense it never would have happened!

GRACE. (*Still insistent*) But what was it? (*Pause.*)

DOCTOR. Grace—

GRACE. Yes? (*Crosses to DOCTOR.*)

DOCTOR. Does your father ever get on your nerves?

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GRACE. No!

DOCTOR. Never?

GRACE. You mean annoy me?

DOCTOR. Yes.

LIVINGSTON. Eh—what is it?

GRACE. (*Almost annoyed at the interruption*)  
Nothing, dad. I wish he wouldn't do that, when a thing has been settled, to ask mother to go all over it again. (*Sits on settee, L.*)

DOCTOR. (*Crosses C. to Mrs. LIVINGSTON, with a chuckle*) Isn't that strange, sister?

GRACE. What is, uncle?

DOCTOR. That's the very thing that did it.

GRACE. Not really?

DOCTOR. (*Mrs. LIVINGSTON is knitting furiously*)  
Yes. That habit of his—"Huh, eh, what's that?"—led to an argument that almost caused a separation.

GRACE. And now half the time mother repeats things for dad before he has a chance to ask.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. What are you trying to prove by all this, Myron?

DOCTOR. That you were right when you said Grace is not old enough to make up her mind, and she won't be until she is an old married woman—at least a year old.

GRACE. Well, how is a girl going to know if her choice is right when she says "yes" to a man?

DOCTOR. She can't! All she can do is hope. And, oh Lord, how she has got to hope. She—

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Is there one thing in the world, Myron, that you haven't used as a subject for an evening lecture here?

DOCTOR. No, I think I have exhausted about everything!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I know you have exhausted me many nights. It wouldn't be so bad if you'd keep to topics that you know something about, but when you, a confirmed bachelor, get on the subject

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of marriage, I should say you were about the poorest authority in the world.

DOCTOR. Not at all! I've never had yellow fever, and yet I can diagnose it. It's the same with marriage. I've studied it—I know the symptoms—the suffering—the treatment—and the cure!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Why don't you write a book on it? (*Disgustedly puts away knitting.*)

DOCTOR. It doesn't need a book—only two words—love and forgive.

GRACE. Must the girl forgive the man she marries a lot?

DOCTOR. Oh, indeed, she must. If you feel you can't forgive a man at least three times a week, Grace—never marry! And I want to see you married—whether you live here or in Siberia.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Rises*) That's fine advice to give a young girl, I must say, Myron. (*Crossing L.*) Goodness knows, if you weren't my brother I'd never recommend you as a doctor! (*Exits L.*)

GRACE. (*Takes DOCTOR's hand, seats him beside her*) Uncle!

DOCTOR. Yes?

GRACE. (*Stops abruptly*) Wait a moment. (*Rises, crosses R. to MR. LIVINGSTON.*) Father—oh, father! (*LIVINGSTON has fallen asleep. GRACE watches him carefully.*) It's all right. (*Crosses and sits R. of settee with DOCTOR, who has moved to L. of it.*) Uncle, did you really mean that a girl can't know about a man until long after she's married?

DOCTOR. I certainly did!

GRACE. Oh, dear!

DOCTOR. (*Thinks for a moment*) Why, who is it?

GRACE. Who's who?

DOCTOR. The boy you have in mind!

GRACE. (*Looks at him for a second, pauses*) Well, there are two of them.

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DOCTOR. Two! You are not as slow as your mother thinks you are. Which are they?

GRACE. One is Dick Loring.

DOCTOR. Ah, ha! And the other?

GRACE. Tommy Tucker.

DOCTOR. (*Surprised*) Tommy! Is that so?

GRACE. Are you surprised?

DOCTOR. No. I rather thought after seeing them here night after night, it would narrow down to those two.

GRACE. Uncle, which would you pick?

DOCTOR. They have both asked you?

GRACE. Dick has, heaps of times. Tommy hasn't. I don't believe Tommy ever would ask me—first. He is the kind who would go to mother and dad and ask them if he could ask me.

DOCTOR. You know I rather favor that method.

GRACE. Well, I don't, and if Tommy ever did that, I wouldn't have him under any circumstances.

DOCTOR. And would that make you prefer Dick?

GRACE. Well, Dick is a dear. He's more romantic than any boy in town. He's terribly good looking too, don't you think?

DOCTOR. Yes, to the feminine eye, I guess he must be.

GRACE. And it's nice to have a good-looking husband. (*Rises, gets R. of settee.*) But I like Tommy, too. He's so dependable and obliging. Of course, Tommy isn't good looking.

DOCTOR. No, you'd never be jealous over Tommy. But that ought to be a comfortable feeling for a woman.

GRACE. I don't know about that. If I liked Tommy, why shouldn't some other girl? Of course, I don't think Tommy would flirt, and Dick is a terrible flirt. That's what makes him so romantic. Tommy isn't romantic at all. Somehow I can't make up

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my mind about them. (*Sits on settee again.*) Uncle, what's your opinion?

DOCTOR. (*Puts arm around her*) Well, I'll tell you. I set Dick's leg once when he had it broken at football, and I could have wished he was my own son the way he took it. I hurt him, too! Tommy? I brought Tommy into the world—his folks were two of my dearest friends, and—well, I wish he had been my son, too. And there you are!

GRACE. You're not much help!

DOCTOR. (*Rises*) No one could be, Grace. There's only one way for you to find out.

GRACE. (*Rises*) What?

DOCTOR. (*Indicating her heart*) That—the lovers' bureau of information. (*The doorbell rings, and LIVINGSTON wakes with a start and looks around in a bewildered way.*)

LIVINGSTON. Eh—what?

GRACE. (*Crosses up R., looking off c.*) The doorbell!

LIVINGSTON. Oh, who is it?

GRACE. We don't know yet. (*Turns and looks at Doctor.*)

LIVINGSTON. Oh! (*As GRACE starts up, MRS. LIVINGSTON enters and crosses to door up c.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I'll go, Grace. (*Exits.*)

GRACE. (*Crosses L. to DOCTOR*) It must be Dick. Mother is going.

LIVINGSTON. (*Stretching*) Aha!

GRACE. (*Crosses down L., gets back from table L.*) Father'll start to wake up now.

DOCTOR. Yes, but only long enough to go to bed. (*Goes up to mantel. MRS. LIVINGSTON enters.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*To GRACE*) It's Dick! (*Crosses down to LIVINGSTON and sits c.*) It's Dick Loring. (*DICK LORING enters, crosses down c. to MR. and MRS. LIVINGSTON, then the DOCTOR. He*

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*is a good-looking, dark boy about twenty-three or twenty-four, strong and athletic looking.)*

DICK. Good evening!

LIVINGSTON. How are you, Dick?

DICK. Good evening, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Hello, Dick! (*Goes up L.*)

DICK. (*Goes to GRACE*) Hello, Grace.

GRACE. Hello, Dick. (*Sits on L. of settee.*)

LIVINGSTON. We have been reading about you tonight, Dick. (*Mrs. LIVINGSTON keeps her eye on DICK all the time, as though she didn't trust him even in her sight.*)

DICK. Yes?

LIVINGSTON. That's right, is it, that you are going away?

DICK. Yes, sir, it's all settled.

DOCTOR. (*Up L.C.*) How soon are you leaving, Dick?

DICK. In another week.

DOCTOR. Where are they sending you?

DICK. I'm not sure, yet.

LIVINGSTON. Eh—what's that?

Mrs. LIVINGSTON. He doesn't know where he's going. (*Seated c.*)

LIVINGSTON. Is that so?

DICK. I don't care much so long as I get away.

DOCTOR. (*Up L.C., sitting at fireplace*) Tired of us here?

DICK. (*Sits with GRACE*) Oh, no. There are some I'll hate to leave, but there are some I won't miss so much. I think, though, it's a good thing to get away. There isn't anything for me here in this town.

Mrs. LIVINGSTON. Well, you mustn't get too restless, Richard. You know what they say about rolling stones.

DICK. A fellow has to do a little rolling, Mrs. Livingston, to find a good place to stop. There's a

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whole lot of fellows who'd have done better if they had rolled away from this village.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Why, I think most of the boys we know are doing very nicely. Now, you take Nathan Allen, helping his father in the store. Mr. Allen told me he didn't know what he would do without Nathan.

GRACE. That's all right for his father, but I don't see where it is helping Nate much. I think Nate is terribly stupid, anyway.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Grace!

GRACE. Well, I do. If we didn't have weather I don't know what he'd do for something to talk about.

DOCTOR. What about Tommy Tucker?

DICK. Oh, well, er—Tommy——

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I won't have you say anything about Tommy! I wouldn't care if he'd never been off Main Street all his life—Tommy is a nice boy!

DICK. Oh, I don't mean to say that any of them are not, Mrs. Livingston. But Tommy is in the class with the rest. How is a fellow to do anything in the real estate business in this town? There isn't anybody moving into the place, and the people here wouldn't sell anything they had, anyway. Tommy is wasting his time here, and I've told him so.

DOCTOR. Tommy seems to be satisfied.

DICK. That's just it, Doctor—they're all satisfied.

GRACE. And they are all dull—deadly dull.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I won't let you call Tommy dull!

GRACE. No, Tommy isn't, but real estate isn't a very romantic business.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Neither is any other.

GRACE. Dick's is.

DICK. Yes, it is romantic, Grace—it's a battle all the time. To fight against the elements—that's the biggest opposition in the world. When you dam a river——

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LIVINGSTON. Er! What did he say?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Dam a river.

LIVINGSTON. Why?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Dick was saying——

GRACE. Oh, tell him later, mother. Yes, Dick?

DICK. Or tunnel a mountain, or throw a bridge across a chasm, you feel as though you had done something.

GRACE. It must be magnificent—and you are going to do all these things, Dick?

DICK. I'll have to do all these things, Grace. You see, I expect to be put in charge of a surveying and construction camp. I am not certain about the location yet, but it's out in the wilds somewhere.

GRACE. Oh, won't that be thrilling!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Fiddlesticks! (*Not liking the trend of the conversation.*)

GRACE. (*Dreamily*) Oh, mother! To sleep out under the trees, to look up at the stars, and in the distance——

DICK. (*Laughs*) Oh, no, Grace, there won't be anything like that! I expect my quarters to be quite comfortable. Why, some of the engineers even bring their wives along. (*Mrs. LIVINGSTON notes this.*)

GRACE. I'd love it!

DICK. You would?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. It's no place for a woman!

GRACE. How do you know, mother—you have never been in one?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Neither has Dick. My brothers used to have a camp, and they thought it was the greatest place in the world just because they could be dirty and sleep in blankets. And I guess one camp is pretty much like another. (*Door-bell rings. DOCTOR rises, comes down L. DICK rises, goes to DOCTOR. DOCTOR gets front of DICK so TOMMY can't see DICK when he comes down C.*)

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GRACE. I guess that is Tommy. Mother—I'll go.  
(*Goes front of DICK and up c., exits.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Grace is getting almost impossible.

LIVINGSTON. Almost what?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Impossible.

LIVINGSTON. Who?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Grace!

LIVINGSTON. What's she been doing?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Why, she—haven't you been listening?

LIVINGSTON. To what? (*Door slams off.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, she—

LIVINGSTON. You tell me later. Who's calling?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Tommy, I think. (*GRACE enters with box of candy.*) Was it Tommy, Grace?

GRACE. Yes, mother. (*Goes to fireplace, throws paper in it.*)

(*TOMMY TUCKER follows GRACE on closely. He is quiet, shy and adoring; follows GRACE with his eyes all the time. He comes between MR. and MRS. LIVINGSTON. GRACE crosses L.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Good evening, Tommy.

TOMMY. Good evening, Mrs. Livingston—Mr. Livingston. Hello, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Hello, Tommy! (*Crosses up c.*)

(*There is a marked difference in TOMMY's greeting for the parents and for the DOCTOR. To the former he is respectfully cordial, but to the latter he is almost filial. The DOCTOR has almost the same worship for him that TOMMY has for GRACE.*)

TOMMY. (*Sees LORING, and shows at once the rivalry he feels*) Hello, Dick!

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DICK. Hello, Tommy! (*He has a mild contempt for TOMMY.*)

GRACE. (*Has opened the box of candy and has offered her mother some, and now extends the box to DICK*) Have some candy? (*TOMMY steps forward.*)

DICK. (*Crosses to GRACE*) Ah—— Oh, local goods!

TOMMY. Yes. Brewer has the best in town, I guess.

DICK. (*Crosses up c.*) In town—yes!

TOMMY. (*Crosses down L. to GRACE*) I'd have run up to Chi and gotten better, Grace, but I didn't think I could get a train to get me back tonight.

GRACE. I like this, Tommy.

TOMMY. You do, eh?

GRACE. Yes, indeed!

TOMMY. Well, you are the one I got it for. (*He turns and grins at DICK, who is down c. DOCTOR smiles and turns up stage.*)

LIVINGSTON. (*Rising*) How about a rubber of bridge? I'd just like something to wake me up. What do you say, Dick?

DICK. (*Crosses R. to LIVINGSTON*) I'd like to—

TOMMY. (*To GRACE*) There'll be just four without us.

DICK. But I can't tonight. I can only stay a little while.

(*MRS. LIVINGSTON disposes of her knitting, goes out, gets card table and brings it in. DICK goes R. to couch.*)

LIVINGSTON. How about you, Myron?

DOCTOR. I'm expecting a telephone call—I'll play until I get it. (*Rises, takes MRS. LIVINGSTON's chair and moves it up c. MRS. LIVINGSTON gives*

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him card table. Crosses R. and gets cards from drawer in table R.)

LIVINGSTON. Somebody can take your hand then. Will you play, Tommy?

TOMMY. Why, I—

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Tommy and I want revenge for the last beating you gave us.

DICK. Grace.

GRACE. Yes, Dick. *(She crosses around up c. and to couch. DOCTOR gets chair from table L.C., puts it front of card table. He is on to TOMMY'S reluctance all the time and is quietly amused.)*

TOMMY. *(Crosses to DICK R.)* Why don't you take my hand, Dick? You play better than I do anyway.

DICK. No, you go right ahead, Tommy, I'd rather sit here and talk to Grace. *(GRACE is seated on couch down stage, DICK above her and TOMMY stands L. of table. By this time everything has been pretty well arranged.)*

LIVINGSTON. Shall we play the same partners as last time? *(DOCTOR gets chair from down L.—puts it L. of card table.)*

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Certainly! Tommy and I wouldn't have it any other way.

LIVINGSTON. Cut for the deal and choice of seats, then—*(Looks around)*—Tommy!

TOMMY. Yes, sir! Oh! *(Realizing they are waiting for him They all cut the cards.)*

LIVINGSTON. You're low, mother. Where do you want to sit?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. *(Who wants to keep her eye on the couple on the sofa)* I'll sit here. Face me, Tommy. *(She is about to sit L. of table.)*

TOMMY. *(Crosses to MRS. LIVINGSTON. He also wishes to keep his eye on DICK and GRACE)* Wouldn't you rather sit here—Mrs. Livingston? *(Takes her chair around to R. of card table.)* The light is better

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over here, I think. (*LIVINGSTON brings chair from desk up R., puts it back of card table.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I can see better here, I think.

TOMMY. (*Takes chair back around back of LIVINGSTON to L. of card table, places it for MRS. LIVINGSTON. Gets stool from front of table R. GRACE laughs at something DICK has said. TOMMY pauses a second, then goes to card table, is about to sit, then has another idea.*) Don't you think we ought to take these seats? (*Indicating chairs that LIVINGSTON and DOCTOR are sitting on.*) These were the lucky ones last time. They held all the cards.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, it's time for the luck to turn to ours. (*Sits. MRS. LIVINGSTON sits on the L. of table, DOCTOR with his back to the audience, and LIVINGSTON facing audience. MRS. LIVINGSTON lets the DOCTOR cut the cards and then she deals.*) Don't you want to come and watch us, Grace?

GRACE. No, mother.

TOMMY. (*Rising, going to R. of C.*) Wouldn't you like to play, Grace? I'd much rather look on.

GRACE. (*Turns to face TOMMY*) No, thank you, Tommy. I'll be company for Dick. I want to hear all about his plans, because he won't be here very much longer. (*Turns back to DICK.*)

TOMMY. (*At table R., his face brightens*) That's so—you won't be here very much longer, will you, Dick?

DICK. No, Tommy, I won't, so you see I have to make the most of my time.

TOMMY. Yes.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Cards, Tommy! (*GRACE and DICK have resumed their conversation and TOMMY watches them—doesn't hear MRS. LIVINGSTON the first time.*) Tommy—the cards are all dealt.

TOMMY. I beg your pardon. (*Picks up his hand and sorts it, trying hard to hear what is being said*)

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behind him. He now spies a looking-glass on the opposite wall which reflects the room behind him. It is on a bit of an angle, so he has to lean up stage to get a good view of the couple behind him. LIVINGSTON thinks he is trying to see his hand and pulls it away. TOMMY is embarrassed. He sits, then rises again, looks in the mirror, then sits.)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (After a little deliberation) I pass!

DOCTOR. A heart!

TOMMY. (Looking at DICK and GRACE, and just conscious it is his turn to bid) Pass!

LIVINGSTON. Pass.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. No trump!

LIVINGSTON. (Exasperated) Why didn't you say that in the first place?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I wanted to see what my partner had.

LIVINGSTON. How do you expect him to have anything if you have no trump?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (Defiantly) What do you do, Myron?

DOCTOR. Pass!

TOMMY. (Looking at DICK and GRACE) Pass!

LIVINGSTON. Two hearts!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Two no trumps.

LIVINGSTON. (Entirely out of patience) What kind of bidding do you call that? You pass first hand and now you are up to two no trumps.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I can bid my hand any way I like.

LIVINGSTON. And you are doing it.

DOCTOR. Pass.

TOMMY. (Still watching DICK and GRACE) Pass.

LIVINGSTON. Pass!

DOCTOR. Well, there you are! (Plays card, looks at TOMMY, attracts his attention by nudging him.) Your hand goes down, Tommy.

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TOMMY. Oh, beg your pardon. (*Lays down his hand and again turns to GRACE and DICK, who are deep in conversation. After a pause, as though he were trying to think of something to say*) How soon are you leaving, Dick? (*DICK and GRACE pay no attention to him*)—Dick!

DICK. (*Turns to TOMMY—he is annoyed*) What?

TOMMY. How soon are you leaving?

DICK. I don't know—I have got to be home early, though.

TOMMY. I mean for good.

DICK. Oh, in about a week, I guess.

TOMMY. Oh, not for a week, eh? (*Pause.*)—Going to be gone long? (*GRACE laughs. There is no answer from DICK. After a pause changes tactics*) The old town is good enough for us, isn't it, Grace?

DICK. (*Turning to TOMMY, rather sarcastically*) I thought you were playing bridge?

TOMMY. (*With a smile of triumph*) I'm dummy!

DICK. Why can't you be a good one? (*Turns back to GRACE.*)

GRACE. (*Turning to TOMMY, sympathetically*) What was it you asked me, Tommy?

TOMMY. I said—the old town was good enough for us.

GRACE. Why, it may be for you, Tommy, but I'm like Dick—I'll be glad to get away.

TOMMY. (*As thought struck*) You don't mean to say you're going away? (*MRS. LIVINGSTON puts cards down, having completed the hand.*)

GRACE. I don't know, Tommy—I may.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Referring to having won the hand*) What do you think of that? (*DOCTOR deals cards.*)

TOMMY. (*Thinking only of what GRACE has said*) I think it is terrible!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. To make a small slam?

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TOMMY. Oh—eh?

DOCTOR. (*Realizing TOMMY has been caught, picks up line for him*) I expected you to make a grand one.

LIVINGSTON. That's the way Emily plays, Myron. Passes a hand first time good enough to go game on.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, if I had known Tommy had all those spades I'd have called no trumps first time. (*Door-bell rings.*)

LIVINGSTON. Who's that?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I don't know, dear. See who it is, Grace.

(*GRACE crosses up c. and exits.*)

DOCTOR. It may be for me!

LIVINGSTON. Let's get on with this hand. (*DICK walks around table, looking at cards each player holds—he first goes back of LIVINGSTON.*)

DOCTOR. I pass.

TOMMY. Pass.

LIVINGSTON. I bid three spades.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Three spades?

LIVINGSTON. That's what I said—and I'll make them, too.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, I haven't given it to you yet! (*DICK crosses down back of MRS. LIVINGSTON.*)

LIVINGSTON. All right, go ahead—bid! I can go higher if I am pushed.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I pass.

DOCTOR. Pass. (*DICK goes back of DOCTOR.*)

TOMMY. Pass. (*MRS. LIVINGSTON plays.*)

LIVINGSTON. Any help, Myron?

DOCTOR. Here and there a card. (*Spreading his hand on table.*)

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(GRACE enters and comes down to table R. of LIVINGSTON, speaking to him.)

GRACE. Oh, dad, it's Mr. Plimmer.

LIVINGSTON. Wants to see me?

GRACE. Of course.

LIVINGSTON. What's he want?

GRACE. I didn't ask him. (*Goes below TOMMY and talks to him a moment. DICK takes her by the arm and they start out up R.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. You'd better go out and see. But talk to him out there. If you ever ask him in here he'll never leave. Grace will play your hand.

LIVINGSTON. (*Rises, crosses up C., taking cards with him*) No, wait until I come back. I want to play this hand myself. (*Exits.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Where are you going, Grace?

GRACE. Out on the porch. (*DOCTOR swings chair, faces R.*) I'm simply burning up in here. (*She and DICK exit, TOMMY following them with his eyes.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Rises, crosses up to window R.*) I wish she wouldn't do that.

DOCTOR. What a glorious night. (*TOMMY heaves a deep sigh.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Why don't you stay in here and play something for us, Grace? Tommy will sing.

TOMMY. (*Rises*) God, no! Please, please, Mrs. Livingston! I don't feel like singing tonight. (*He comes down front to R.*)

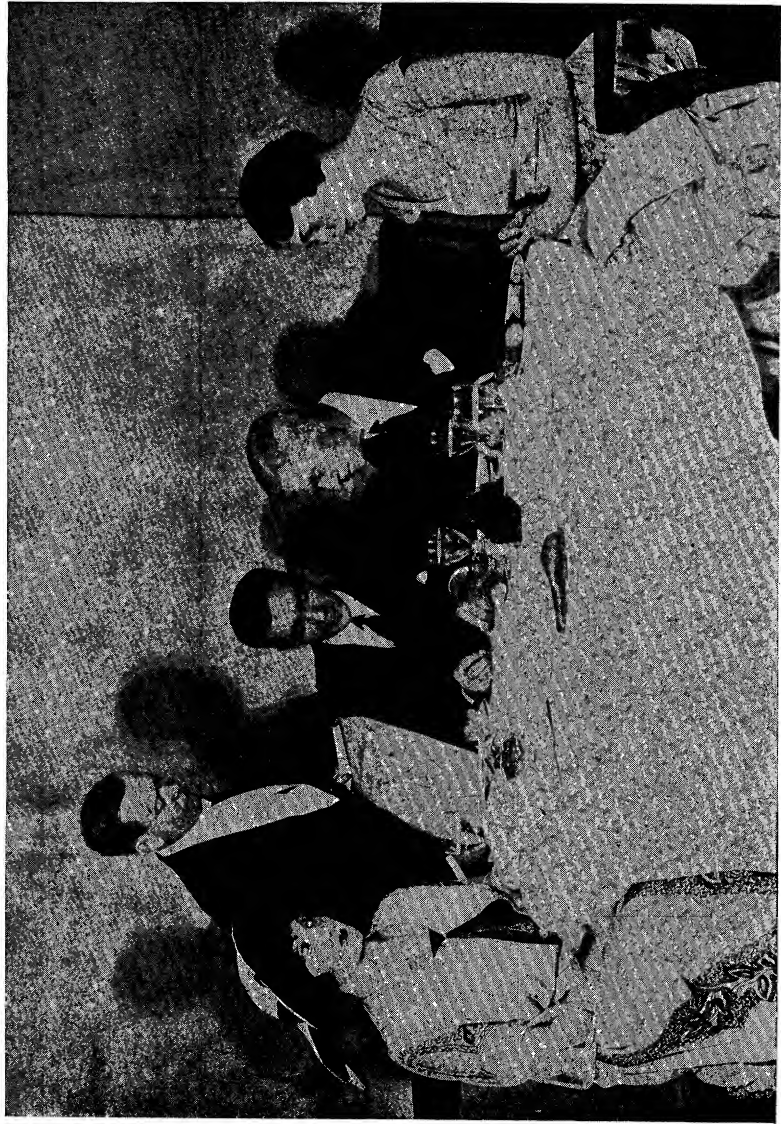
MRS. LIVINGSTON. What's the matter, Tommy, don't you feel well?

TOMMY. No, ma'am—I've a headache—had it all day.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I'm sorry, Tommy. Can't you give him something, Myron? (*Crossing to DOCTOR.*)

DOCTOR. (*TOMMY turns to watch GRACE and DICK*) I think so. Get me a glass of water, sister. You should have some aspirin in the house.

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From "The Year of the Dragon"

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MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Crosses to L.*) They'll be in Fred's little table if they're any place. (*Exits L.*)

TOMMY. I'll be all right, Doctor.

DOCTOR. Well, aspirin won't hurt you, Tommy, whether you have a headache or not. (TOMMY, *stealing, looks out window.* DOCTOR *rises, goes to TOMMY.*) What sort of a pain is it, Tommy, dull—heavy?

TOMMY. Yes, sir.

DOCTOR. Ah, yes, stomach, probably. (GRACE and DICK, *arm in arm, pass window R. and then out of sight.*)

TOMMY. I guess so, sir. (*Looking off R., then turning to DOCTOR.*) Doctor, has Grace said anything to you about going away?

DOCTOR. No. Is she?

TOMMY. She just told me just now she might.

DOCTOR. (*Goes up R.C.*) Humph!

TOMMY. (*Watching DOCTOR, and getting L. of c.*) What is it, Doctor?

DOCTOR. (*Coming down R. of c.*) She may mean that, Tommy. I think Dick is trying to induce her to go away with him now.

TOMMY. Yes?

DOCTOR. Yes.

TOMMY. (*Crossing R., looking out window*) Yes, I thought of sort—sort of thought so, myself.

DOCTOR. Grace likes Dick.

TOMMY. Yes, I think she does.

DOCTOR. He's the style that appeals to the girls, Tommy, not fellows like us.

TOMMY. (*Turning to DOCTOR, and mentally comparing himself with him*) Us?

DOCTOR. Yes, us. We're alike, I think. (*Enter MRS. LIVINGSTON.*) We're quiet, matter-of-fact sort of men—no romance about us, is there?

TOMMY. No, sir.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. There you are, Myron—now

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I'll find the tablets. (*Puts glass of water on card table, then crosses up c.*)

TOMMY. Please don't bother, Mrs. Livingston. (*Going up R.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Bother? Don't be silly, Tommy. (*Exits up c.*)

TOMMY. (*Coming down R. to front of table R.*) You know, Doctor, I think you're all wrong about me.

DOCTOR. How so, Tommy?

TOMMY. I am romantic!

DOCTOR. You are?

TOMMY. Yes, sir—more than you'd suspect.

DOCTOR. Is that so? Why, I'd about made up my mind you were going to be an old bachelor—like me, Tommy.

TOMMY. I hope not.

DOCTOR. Huh?

TOMMY. What I mean is I'd like to get married sometime.

DOCTOR. Did you have a girl in mind that you wanted to marry?

TOMMY. (*Looking out window*) Yes, sir—I have.

DOCTOR. Oh, you did, eh?

TOMMY. (*Turning to DOCTOR*) No—not did, have! I've got her in mind now. That's as near as I'll ever get her, I guess.

DOCTOR. Why, who is she?

TOMMY. Are you making fun of me, Doctor?

DOCTOR. You don't mean Grace!

TOMMY. I haven't been coming here night after night to see Mrs. Livingston.

DOCTOR. Well, has Grace refused you?

TOMMY. (*Doubtfully*) I've never asked her.

DOCTOR. Well, what are you waiting for? She can't say yes if you don't ask her.

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TOMMY. (*Indicating DICK and GRACE, out window R.*) I'm afraid it's too late now.

DOCTOR. That's no way to talk—try it and find out!

TOMMY. (*Turning to DOCTOR*) All right, Doctor, I will! I'll speak to Mr. and Mrs. Livingston tonight.

DOCTOR. Good Lord, no—speak to Grace!

TOMMY. To Grace?

DOCTOR. Yes.

TOMMY. (*Looking off to balcony*) How'll I get a chance?

DOCTOR. Make one! If you're romantic—be romantic—put your whole heart into it—don't be afraid! Walk right up and grab her—and make her listen to you.

TOMMY. Well, Doctor, when you say grab her—you don't mean—(*Makes movement of grabbing*)—grab her?

DOCTOR. Yes, I do—grab her and hang on.

(*MRS. LIVINGSTON enters with tablets, comes down between TOMMY and DOCTOR.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Here you are, Tommy. (*She gives TOMMY a pill.*) How many do you think he ought to take, Myron?

DOCTOR. (*Looks at TOMMY*) Well, not many. You can take one now and one in half an hour, Tommy.

TOMMY. Yes, sir. (*Takes the pill and glass of water, which he gets from card table, places glass of water on table R.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*After placing aspirin bottle on table R., goes L. of card table, sits*) Fred still talking?

DOCTOR. I guess so! (*Door slam.*)

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(LIVINGSTON *enters, comes to his seat back of card table. DOCTOR and TOMMY resume their seats.*)

LIVINGSTON. All right—I bid three spades!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Did you? I wish your memory was as good as that about other things.

LIVINGSTON. And you all passed. (*Telephone bell rings twice.*)

DOCTOR. I guess that's for me.

LIVINGSTON. Oh, Lord!

DOCTOR. (*Goes to 'phone up c.*) Hello—this is Dr. Anderson—yes, Miss Kennedy—she has? All right—I'll be right over. (*Hangs up receiver, rings off, comes down c.*) I'll have to leave.

LIVINGSTON. This has been a fine rubber.

DOCTOR. I'm sorry, Fred.

LIVINGSTON. Well, you're dummy anyway, Myron. We can finish this hand. (*DOCTOR goes up c. As he passes TOMMY he nudges him to attract his attention.*)

(*TOMMY turns to DOCTOR, who stops up c., then turns to TOMMY and motions for TOMMY to grab GRACE. LIVINGSTON turns, catches the DOCTOR, who goes into hall up c. TOMMY and the LIVINGSTONS start playing the hand. GRACE enters from porch; she is very serious, and goes to window-seat R. As GRACE enters, TOMMY turns to see her and plays out of turn. DICK follows GRACE in and goes down R. a little, watching GRACE, then back to c.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. That was my king, Tommy. (*GRACE goes to window seat R., sits.*)

TOMMY. I beg your pardon!

DICK. (*Coming to back of card table*) Good-night, Mrs. Livingston, Mr. Livingston!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Going, Dick?

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DICK. Yes—I have some blue prints I have to look over.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I see. Well, good-night.

DICK. *(Almost walks into the DOCTOR out in hall up c.)* Good-night, Doctor.

DOCTOR. You're leaving early, aren't you?

DICK. I didn't expect to stay late tonight. I have a lot of work to do. *(Exits.)*

DOCTOR. Wait a minute. I'll go along with you. *(Out in hall.)*

LIVINGSTON. Oh, Myron— *(DOCTOR comes to door c.)* I made my three.

DOCTOR. Good! *(Exits c. to L.)*

MRS. LIVINGSTON. You wouldn't if Tommy hadn't put his ace on my king of diamonds. *(Door slam.)*

TOMMY. I'm terribly sorry about that.

LIVINGSTON. You want to play, Grace?

GRACE. I'd rather not, dad. *(Crosses and sits on arm of sofa R.)*

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Tommy's head is aching, too.

LIVINGSTON. *(Resigned)* Oh, all right. *(Takes table with cards and scores and exits into hall with them. MRS. LIVINGSTON moves the chairs, one down L., the other up L.C., then tidies music on piano.)*

TOMMY. *(Crosses to GRACE, replacing stool below table R.)* I haven't had a chance to talk to you all evening.

GRACE. Well, you'd rather play cards.

TOMMY. Not rather.

GRACE. You did. I supposed you preferred to.

TOMMY. I'll never do it again. The next time I'm asked to play cards I am going to say, No, I have a headache. Of course—I'll do it nicely, but I won't play cards.

GRACE. Tommy, you are getting bold. *(LIVINGSTON enters c.)*

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LIVINGSTON. It's half-past nine, mother. I'm going to bed.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. All right, dear.

LIVINGSTON. Good-night, Tommy.

TOMMY. Oh, good-night, Mr. Livingston. (MRS. LIVINGSTON *arranges music on top of piano and closes it.*)

LIVINGSTON. (*Coming down R.C.*) Where is Dick?

GRACE. Gone!

LIVINGSTON. Is that so?

GRACE. He said good-night to you.

LIVINGSTON. (*Crosses between GRACE and TOMMY*) Did he? I didn't hear him.

GRACE. He had some work to do.

LIVINGSTON. Did he? Oh, I see. (*Sits between TOMMY and GRACE.*) How is business with you, Tommy?

TOMMY. Why, all right, Mr. Livingston—in fact, I am doing very well, much better than I expected to be doing. You see, I have a business that is certain—it isn't big, but it is certain. I am very glad that you and Mrs. Livingston are here because it gives me a chance to speak to you on a subject— (*The LIVINGSTONS are all attention. GRACE looks as though she could guess what was coming and dreads it.*) I have wanted to speak to you about. (*Telephone bell rings.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Just one moment, Tommy! (*Goes to 'phone. TOMMY is perspiring with nerves.*) Hello! Yes—who is it— Oh! Tommy, Myron wants to speak to you.

TOMMY. The Doctor? (*Crosses to 'phone. MRS. LIVINGSTON comes down C. and sits.*) Hello! Yes, sir—yes—I know he did—they have?—Yes—I'll try—and remember—yes—thanks for reminding me! (*He hangs up receiver, rings off, and comes down R. of C. in a bewildered manner.*)

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MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*To TOMMY, as he gets down R.C.*) Was it important?

TOMMY. Yes! Yes! I should say it was! Something the Doctor wanted me to be sure and remember.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I think I know what it is!

TOMMY. (*Afraid she does*) You do?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Your other tablet.

TOMMY. Yes, that's it! He thought I'd forget it. (*Gets tablet from table, and water, takes tablet feverishly, with relief.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Now, Tommy, we are all interested— What was it you were going to tell us?

TOMMY. (*After a second's pause*) Nothing!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. What?

TOMMY. I guess I'd rather not say anything about it.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, if it's important and something you think Fred and I ought to know—

TOMMY. (*Quickly*) No, no, it's nothing like that.

LIVINGSTON. Like what?

TOMMY. Like something you ought to know. It'd take rather a long time to tell you, and I didn't realize it was so late.

LIVINGSTON. Well, then, don't start it tonight.

TOMMY. No, I won't.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, just as you please about it. (*Rises, moves chair up R. of table L.*) Good-night, Tommy.

TOMMY. Good-night.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Don't sit up too late, Grace. (*Goes off C., for count of ten, then comes back to doorway, calling down stage*) Fred! (*Exits upstairs.*)

LIVINGSTON. Eh? (*Looks from GRACE to TOMMY, then realizes that MRS. LIVINGSTON means to leave them alone.*) Oh! (*Rises and goes up C.*) Oh—good-night, Tommy! (*Exits upstairs.*)

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TOMMY. Good-night! (TOMMY goes up to see if they are gone, then after a pause looks at telephone, remembering what the DOCTOR told him. Then making up his mind, he comes down stage back of GRACE and grabs her.)

GRACE. Tommy, behave yourself! (She pushes him off; he falls away in front of her, then rises and slowly crosses stage to L.) What do you mean by that?

TOMMY. I beg your pardon.

GRACE. What's the matter with you?

TOMMY. Will you forgive me, please!

GRACE. Why, Tommy, that isn't a bit like you.

TOMMY. I know it isn't.

GRACE. Tommy, what did Uncle call you up about?

TOMMY. He wanted to give me some advice—about something.

GRACE. (Rising) Oh!

TOMMY. But it wasn't any good.

GRACE. I thought your telephone message had something to do with me. (Sits on stool front of table R.) Oh, Tommy, what were you going to speak to mother and dad about?

TOMMY. It wasn't anything important—it was something about business.

GRACE. Oh, is your business improving, Tommy?

TOMMY. Yes—that is, I'm satisfied!

GRACE. Yes, that's what Dick said about you to-night—"you're satisfied."

TOMMY. (Crossing to her) Dick's all wrong about that—I'm a long way from being satisfied.

GRACE. He meant with your business and your surroundings!

TOMMY. Oh!

GRACE. Don't you feel, though, Tommy, that you'd like to get away—branch out and try your luck with new people in new scenes?

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TOMMY. Why, would you like to go away, Grace?

GRACE. Indeed I would, Tommy! I am so tired of the same parties with the same people—same talk—same everything. You don't know how I almost hate it.

TOMMY. Well, I suppose it's because you're a girl—you haven't business to take up your time. Maybe if you had a home—of your own—I mean—a home of your own—that would help to keep you busy—and happy!

GRACE. Here?

TOMMY. Yes!

GRACE. Oh, no! (TOMMY turns away.) It's nerves with me, Tommy! I can't listen to the surf—some people it puts to sleep. I never could practice scales; it drives me mad to sit and go da, da, da, da, da, da! I wish I had been a boy! I'd go and see places and people—get out and do something—like Dick!

TOMMY. You and Dick are a good deal alike. I suppose that's the sort of chap you'd like to marry, Grace.

GRACE. Maybe we wouldn't want to travel to the same places at the same time, though.

TOMMY. I should think a fellow would do anything you would want him to do.

GRACE. (Looks at him) All men are not like you, Tommy!

TOMMY. No, that's right—if they were there'd be no Columbuses, or Drakes, or Pearys.

GRACE. (Rising) I wonder what sort of a girl you'll marry, Tommy.

TOMMY. (Without looking at her) I don't know—now!

GRACE. Why "now"? Did someone refuse you, Tommy?

TOMMY. Practically.

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GRACE. Then she hasn't one grain of sense! (*He turns to her quickly.*) Who is she, Tommy? (TOMMY, *with his heart in his eyes, thinking she knows but is laughing at him, turns away.*) Can you tell me? Honest, who is it? (*Pause.*)

TOMMY. You!

GRACE. Me? (*Pretending surprise.*)

TOMMY. Ugh-hugh!

GRACE. But how can you say I refused you, Tommy? You've—you've never asked me!

TOMMY. (*Looks at her*) I thought you knew—just now I spoke about a home of your own.

GRACE. Oh, Tommy! (*Meaning she never considered that a proposal.*)

TOMMY. (*Turns away*) I know that whatever I'd offer you wouldn't be inducement enough. For the first time, I wish I was like Dick. But I'm not—I couldn't be!

GRACE. (*Coming down to him*) Couldn't you, Tommy?

TOMMY. No, I just couldn't. I'll tell you the truth—while you were out there with Dick tonight, the Doctor told me I was all wrong. He told me I ought to be romantic. He told me a lot of things to do. I can't remember them, and I couldn't do them if I did. I was going to speak to your father and mother tonight, and then the telephone rang, and the Doctor told me—again—I wasn't to do that—he told me before, but I had forgotten that, too.

GRACE. I thought that was it. Did he tell you Dick and I had had a quarrel?

TOMMY. Yes.

GRACE. And the reason?

TOMMY. No—he didn't have time. He just said "Be romantic and grab her!"

GRACE. (*Laughs; goes up R. a little and comes back to TOMMY*) You do love me a lot, don't you, Tommy?

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TOMMY. Grace, I can't tell you how much.

GRACE. You don't have to. I wonder if you would marry me if I said—yes?

TOMMY. Grace!

GRACE. Wait! If I, said "yes"!

TOMMY. Yes.

GRACE. Provided we go away some place to live.

TOMMY. All right! (*Pause.*) But wouldn't it be the same if we took a couple of trips every year? Then, when we came back, everything would be practically new!

GRACE. I couldn't marry anyone and live here.

TOMMY. (*Quickly*) All right. (*Then another pause for thought.*) But there is my business, Grace?

GRACE. Haven't you faith enough in yourself to build up another—some other place? I have.

TOMMY. Have you? Yes, I guess I could do that! Is that all, Grace?

GRACE. That's all, Tommy!

TOMMY. Gee! What a lucky fellow I am.

GRACE. Do you really think so, Tommy? Caring for the things you do, you'd give them all up for me, and think you were lucky?

TOMMY. Why, that's nothing to what I'd do for you. I wish I could tell you!

GRACE. (*Sits L. of table R.*) There is something I must tell you, too, Tommy. I want always to be honest with you. Sit down. (*TOMMY looks around for a seat at L.*) No, here! (*TOMMY crosses R., sits front of table R. on stool. GRACE moves her chair down close to him.*) I told you Dick and I had a quarrel. Do you want to know what it was about?

TOMMY. If you want to tell me.

GRACE. Yes, I do. Dick asked me to marry him. Go away with him. And when I wouldn't elope, we quarrelled. It wasn't that so much, though, as it

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was *what* he said—that it would be the last chance I'd have.

TOMMY. Oh! I see. You are agreeing to marry me just to show Dick?

GRACE. No—I'm marrying you—(*Rising and meaning it*)—because I love you, Tommy! (TOMMY rises.) And I will try and make you happy.

TOMMY. All I ask is to be as happy as I am at this moment. (GRACE stands waiting for him to kiss her. They are both embarrassed.) Are we engaged?

GRACE. Well, not really—yet! (*There is a pause. They both stand looking at each other; then he kisses her, gets foot caught in stool, takes it out, laughing. GRACE laughs, then sits in chair L. of table R.*)

TOMMY. We are now!

GRACE. Yes! (TOMMY sits on table, then on arm of her chair. He tries to get his arm around her, but just as he gets it back of her, she looks up, and he brushes his hair back. Then as she looks away he gets arm back of her.)

TOMMY. Did you really mean what you said about wanting to go away?

GRACE. Oh, yes, Tommy. I want to travel and see strange places.

TOMMY. Well, how about Joplin, Missouri?

GRACE. Joplin?

TOMMY. Would you like to go there?

GRACE. Oh, yes.

TOMMY. Well, that's fine, because I know a fellow in Joplin who has a business for sale, and he told me—— (*As he speaks the lights go down until the house is in utter darkness. Then a clock strikes twelve, and as lights go up they are sitting in the same position. Two blue spots come on at R. with stage lights, one hits table R., the other hits door up C.*)  
—More than anybody in the world?

GRACE. More than anybody in the world.

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MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*From head of stairs, off stage*) Grace, do you know it is twelve o'clock?

GRACE. Yes, mother!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Has Tommy gone?

GRACE. He's just going. (*Goes front of table and up to door R.* TOMMY rises. *His foot is asleep; he kicks it with the other to wake it up. Gets hat he has left on table in hall, then kisses GRACE and exits; he is heard whistling down the street.* GRACE, *humming to herself, turns off light in lamp on table R., then switch R. of door C., at the foot of the stairs she calls—*) Mother, what do you think?

CURTAIN

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## ACT II

*The home of the Tuckers in Joplin, Mo.*

*An unpretentious panelled room in a plain wash color. It is furnished with cheap Mission furniture. A large recessed window c. (curtained). There is a door L.U., leading from the hallway, in which there is a thumb bell. This door is set in a sort of alcove, about a foot and a half deep, just allowing room for a hat-rack and an umbrella stand.*

*Swinging door R. leads to the kitchen. Below this door there is a built-in china closet. The lower half is taken up with three drawers in which is kept the table linen; the upper half, filled with shelves and books, holds the plates and saucers and knives and forks and cups. There is a chain placed below this cupboard.*

*Below the door is a small table. On it are four napkins and rolls, all ready for the dinner table. Against the wall L.C. is a combination desk and bookcase. In the upper part with the bookshelves are two blue prints of the Amusement Park property. The desk has the usual assortment of writing paper, pen and ink, etc. On top of the bookcase is a small oval frame with GRACE'S picture in it, and above the desk is a still larger one hanging on the wall; between the bookcase and the c. window there is a victrola, with records in the cabinet below.*

*A dining table stands R.C. A buzzer, with the wire running to the kitchen, is under the table within easy reach of GRACE's foot when she seats herself. A small triangular-shaped table is L.C. with a large easy chair R. of it and a smaller chair L. Everything is neat but inexpensive. There are four green glass brackets on the wall.*

*It is about seven-thirty in the evening.*

*(After curtain is well up, GRACE enters from kitchen with tray on which are three vases of flowers; puts tray on table, places one vase on table up R., the next on bookcase up L.C., and third on table down L.C. Crosses to closet R. and gets four dinner plates and four salad plates and puts them on tray. Doorbell rings; she hesitates, then crosses to door and opens it. HATTIE discovered standing there.)*

GRACE. Well?

HATTIE. I want to see Mrs. Tucker.

GRACE. Just come in a minute, please. (HATTIE enters. She is poorly dressed; carries a small net shopping bag. Comes down C. GRACE closes door, comes down L. of table L.) I am Mrs. Tucker.

HATTIE. My Mammie sent me to tell you she cain't come to work for you this evenin'!

GRACE. Oh, good heavens! (Sits L. of table L. HATTIE comes down C. and waits to be questioned. She has the habit of not looking at the person she is speaking to.) Why can't your mother come to-night?

HATTIE. She's got misery.

GRACE. I never heard of it. What's misery?

HATTIE. I don't know exactly, but it makes Mammie feel like she don't want to do nothin' but lie down.

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GRACE. (*Crosses to HATTIE*) You go home and tell your mother I've simply got to have her. I've two people coming to dinner tonight I've never seen before.

HATTIE. It won't do no good, 'cause when she gets her misery attacks, she has to break all her dates.

GRACE. (*Crosses R.C., stops suddenly*) Oh, dear! (*HATTIE turns, comes down c.*) What's your name?

HATTIE. Hattie.

GRACE. Well—er—Hattie, do you work out?

HATTIE. 'Casionally.

GRACE. What do you do?

HATTIE. Washes.

GRACE. Did you ever wait on table?

HATTIE. Yes'm—but I washes best, tho'.

GRACE. I don't need anybody to wash tonight; but I do want someone to serve dinner. Will you do that for me?

HATTIE. There's something here I got to take home to Mammie— (*Holding up the net bag.*)

GRACE. But, Hattie, I only want you about an hour. Won't that be time enough?

HATTIE. (*Thinks for a moment*) Yes'm, I guess so.

GRACE. You see, I can tell you exactly what I want you to do. You will just remember what I tell you. (*Goes to right R.*) And I'll give you an apron to wear.

HATTIE. (*Sitting in armchair L. of table R.*) That's all right—these are my old clothes.

GRACE. Just the same, I'd rather you'd wear one. (*Goes to closet R., gets two bouillon cups and four saucers and puts them on tray on table R.C.*) We are not going to have anything elaborate, but I have cooked a nice dinner, and I'd like it well served. Come here, Hattie. (*HATTIE goes up R. to GRACE.*) Do you know where to stand when you are waiting on a person?

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HATTIE. Alongside of them.

GRACE. (*Trying to be patient*) Yes, of course, but which side?

HATTIE. Nome.

GRACE. On the left!

HATTIE. On the lef'?

GRACE. (*Crosses c. and sits in chair L. of table R.*) Yes. For instance, if I was sitting here, where would you stand?

HATTIE. On the lef'!

GRACE. Show me!

HATTIE. (*Hesitates, then crosses to L. of GRACE*) Here!

GRACE. (*Rises, goes down R., gets two bouillon cups from sideboard*) Now, Hattie, do you know what these are for?

HATTIE. Coffee!

GRACE. (*Crossing to HATTIE*) No—not with two handles. These are for the bouillon.

HATTIE. (*That meaning nothing to her*) What?

GRACE. Boo—soup! (*Puts cups on tray.*) First, though, we'll have melon.

HATTIE. Yes'm.

GRACE. Then the soup, roast chicken and two vegetables, salad and coffee. The coffee you will serve after everything. (*Crosses to closet, gets two demi-tasse cups and four saucers.*)

HATTIE. After everything—after the melon and after the soup—

GRACE. (*Gets two more cups from closet*) No, no, Hattie, you will serve the coffee—when the dinner is over—in these little cups. (*Showing one to HATTIE.*)

HATTIE. Yes'm.

GRACE. Hattie, are you sure you have waited on table before?

HATTIE. Yes'm, but I washes best, tho'.

GRACE. You come with me and I'll show you

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where to hang your things and what I want done first. (*Takes tray and exits to kitchen, followed by HATTIE.*)

(*TOMMY enters by street door up L., carrying bag of oranges and peanuts. As he enters he gives a whistle as a signal he has arrived. He hangs hat on rack L. of door. As he comes down stage he sees the table still unset and takes out his watch, surprised arrangements are not more advanced. Gives another whistle. He puts fruit in silver dish on table and takes dish and bag of peanuts up to table up R.—he stuffs empty bag into his pocket. As he stands with back to audience the swinging door opens with a bang and hits him on the back.*)

GRACE. (*Enters with pad for table*) Darling, I didn't know you were here. Did I hurt you?

TOMMY. No. Do you know what time it is?

GRACE. (*Takes center piece from large table, puts it on table up R.*) Seven?

TOMMY. It's after.

GRACE. I can't help it. (*Starts to put pad on table.*) Margaret never showed up, and I had everything to do myself.

TOMMY. (*Empties bag of peanuts into two glass dishes on table up R.*) What is the matter with Margaret?

GRACE. She has misery.

TOMMY. What's misery?

GRACE. I haven't any idea, except that it is something that is supposed to love company, so I know I haven't got it. (*Spreads tablecloth, which she gets from drawer of cupboard down R.*)

TOMMY. What are we going to do for somebody to wait on table?

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GRACE. Margaret's daughter just showed up, so there will be somebody——

TOMMY. You poor dear! (*Starts to embrace her, but she holds him off.*)

GRACE. Please don't, darling! There is plenty to do yet.

TOMMY. I'll help you, dear! (*Goes down R., gets basket containing knives, forks and spoons; he puts basket on tablecloth that GRACE is trying to spread, she moves it over L., then he places knives where forks should be. GRACE follows him, fixing them in their proper places.*)

GRACE. Please don't, Tommy! I'd rather do it myself.

TOMMY. I thought you wanted some help?

GRACE. You're getting it all wrong.

TOMMY. All right, go ahead and do it yourself, then. (*He takes chair from L. of table R., moves it up R.*)

GRACE. Will you please put that chair back where it belongs? (*TOMMY puts chair back in its place.*)

TOMMY. What's the matter with you tonight, aren't you feeling well?

GRACE. How would you feel if you were left without help and had people coming for dinner you had never seen?

TOMMY. Oh, I know, dear, but they'll understand, and make allowances.

GRACE. Will they? Don't forget one of them is a woman. (*Crosses to closet, gets two salt and two pepper-shakers and puts them on table, spilling the salt. TOMMY throws it over shoulders.*)

TOMMY. I'm sure Mrs. Barstow will. If she is anything like her husband she will, and I haven't told you yet just why I wanted him to have dinner with us tonight——

GRACE. Having dinner with us is all right, but why not take them out some place to dinner? It

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would have been much simpler and no more expensive. (*Crosses to closet, gets glasses and places them on table.*)

TOMMY. I know, but I wanted Mr. Barstow to come here. It's a business reason, and a very important one.

GRACE. (*Crosses to small table R., puts a roll in each napkin; crosses to table and puts one at each place*) I don't suppose it ever occurred to you that I might like to go to a restaurant—that I might like a change from this eternal cooking and eating at home. I am honestly so tired of eating food I have watched cook, I'd be willing to make a meal of boiled cabbage if I could go out for it—and I hate cabbage! (*Exits R., with a bang on the door.*)

TOMMY. (*Goes to door, calls off to her*) I didn't know you felt that way. (*GRACE enters, bumping TOMMY with door, carrying water-pitcher and speaking back into kitchen to HATTIE.*)

GRACE. Take the potatoes off next, Hattie. (*She fills glasses on table.*)

TOMMY. (*Crosses down to GRACE*) I'll tell you what we'll do, then—tomorrow night you go out to dinner, and we won't eat boiled cabbage, either. Go any place you say, and have anything you want. How's that?

GRACE. Well, I'll see how I feel. (*Filling last glass. TOMMY crosses around to up L. of table and drinks from a glass GRACE has just filled.*) Tommy, I just filled that! Now you hurry and get dressed. (*TOMMY crosses up L. to door, takes bag from pocket, throws it in umbrella stand.*)

TOMMY. What do you mean by get dressed?

GRACE. Just what I say. You are not going to sit down to dinner looking like that, are you?

TOMMY. (*Crosses to c.*) But you don't mean my full-dress clothes?

GRACE. Certainly I do.

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TOMMY. (*Almost crying*) Oh, I don't have to do that, Grace! Nobody dresses for dinner in Joplin!

GRACE. (*Crosses to TOMMY up c.*) Now listen, Tommy! It's bad enough to have to invite people to little cramped quarters like these, and we can't help it if they think we can't afford better, but at least we are not going to act in a way to make them think we don't *know* better. So hurry up! (*Puts water-pitcher on table up R.*)

TOMMY. (*Unties necktie, unbuttons collar*) All right, but I never feel comfortable in them.

GRACE. (*Gets carving set from closet, places it on R. of table*) That's because you don't wear them enough. You ought to be glad you have something to wear—it's more than I have! (*She gets chair from up R., places it R. of table R. Chair down R. she places front of table. TOMMY exits L., leaving door open. HATTIE enters from the kitchen, crosses to back of table.*)

HATTIE. I got that salad all done like you told me!

GRACE. (*Closes door of closet R., crosses up to R. of HATTIE*) All right, Hattie. Now you can fix the melons and put them back on the ice. Cut them across.

HATTIE. (*Starts to go, stops*) Yes'm. Which way is across?

GRACE. What?

HATTIE. Is across this way or that way? (*Gestures up and down and from side to side.*)

GRACE. Just cut them in half—this way.

HATTIE. Oh. Cut them in half is the same as cut them across, is it?

GRACE. Just the same, Hattie. (*HATTIE exits into kitchen. GRACE starts for kitchen.*)

TOMMY. (*Off stage*) Grace! Oh, Grace!

GRACE. What?

TOMMY. Is this the only shirt I have?

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GRACE. I am sure I don't know. (*Takes chair from front of screen, places it back of table.*)

TOMMY. (*Enters with shirt in his hand*) I can't wear this one—I couldn't last time.

GRACE. (*Comes to him c.*) What's the matter with it?

TOMMY. It's got three buttonholes, and I only have two studs. Is this the only thing I have?

GRACE. (*Going r. to closet*) I don't know, Tommy. I don't wear your shirts.

TOMMY. I know you don't wear my shirts, but did you send them out to the laundry?

GRACE. I did if you put them in the laundry bag. I am not going to touch your things after the last lecture you read me.

TOMMY. When did I do that?

GRACE. (*Comes c. to TOMMY—HATTIE enters*) Last week I looked through your wardrobe to see if you had forgotten—

TOMMY. (*HATTIE comes down r.*) I did nothing of the kind. I only said it was strange to have anyone arrange things for me. (*He sees HATTIE, stops, fascinated, and he and HATTIE stand taking one another in. To GRACE*) Is that—

GRACE. That is—and glad to get it. (*Crossing to HATTIE.*) Hattie, did you seed the melons?

HATTIE. Yes'm, I seed them. (*TOMMY goes up c.*)

GRACE. No—I mean did you take the seeds out?

HATTIE. Oh, does you do that?

GRACE. Of course.

HATTIE. (*Starts up r. to kitchen*) But there's one of them no good!

GRACE. No good? (*HATTIE stops at door.*)

TOMMY. (*Crosses down, c. to l. of GRACE*) How many did you get?

GRACE. Two.

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TOMMY. I know, dearest, but there are four people.

GRACE. Cut two melons in halves, and there should be enough, if they're all right.

TOMMY. I know. But I should have thought you'd have bought another to be sure.

GRACE. The man told me they were good.

TOMMY. Certainly he would. But didn't you feel them?

GRACE. I felt fifty of them, until I had no sense of touch left. Hattie, is there a good one?

HATTIE. Yes'm, one's all right.

GRACE. Then give the best half of the one that is no good to Mr. Tucker, and I won't eat any. *(She crosses up R. to table, gets the two dishes of peanuts and puts them on the table.)*

HATTIE. Yes'm. *(Exits.)*

TOMMY. Grace, you are not going to let her wait on table looking like that, are you? Can't you fix her up some way?

GRACE. *(Crossing to him, almost in tears)* Tommy, whom do you wish me to dress first, you, or Hattie, or myself? If you'll only give me half a chance I'll see to things. But first you come with a shirt, then Hattie with a melon, and me with a whole dinner on my hands!

TOMMY. What do you want me to do?

GRACE. I want you to get in the room and finish dressing, and get out of the way so I can get dressed.

TOMMY. All right—that's all you have to tell me. *(Exits, closes door after him. HATTIE enters, comes behind table R.C.)*

HATTIE. There's only one vegetable dish out there, Misses Tucker.

GRACE. *(Goes down R., gets dish, gives it to HATTIE—in a very tired voice)* Here's the other one, Hattie.

HATTIE. That's pretty, ain't it?

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GRACE. (*Closes closet*) Yes, it is part of my wedding present. (*HATTIE starts out L. GRACE goes up to screen.*) Oh, Hattie, will you turn out the gas in the oven? I won't have to go in the kitchen again. Oh, Hattie! (*HATTIE stops. GRACE crosses up to L. of HATTIE.*) Now are you sure you have everything in your mind in case I don't have a chance to go over it with you again?

HATTIE. Yes'm, I guess so.

GRACE. Now, Hattie, where are you going to stand when you hand folks their plates?

HATTIE. (*Crosses down to R., swings dish to indicate place—GRACE goes up*) Here!

GRACE. I know—but which side is it? Wait! This will make it easier for you. You are to stand in these places—(*They go around table to back of it*)—here, here, here, and here.

HATTIE. Yes'm.

GRACE. What are you going to serve first?

HATTIE. Soup.

GRACE. No, no, first the melon. (*Moves chair out from front of table R. so she won't have to when she sits in it a moment later.*)

HATTIE. That's right, I forget the melon.

GRACE. Then the soup.

HATTIE. Yes'm.

GRACE. Roast chicken and two vegetables.

HATTIE. Yes'm.

GRACE. Then the salad, and after—

HATTIE. (*Swings dish and cover up almost over her shoulder*) After everything comes the coffee.

GRACE. Oh, Hattie, I really believe you can do it, if you will just remember.

HATTIE. (*Down R.*) Yessum, mammy says I can do things right if I wants to.

GRACE. Well, then, please, Hattie, this time, want to a lot.

HATTIE. Yes'm.

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GRACE. Now I'll get dressed and find an apron for you by the time I'm ready. (*HATTIE exits with dish GRACE has given her. GRACE pulls screen around the table, and as she does so there is a crash of china. GRACE stands for a moment undecided whether to cry or not, and finally—*) Damn it! (*Sits front of table R. TOMMY enters in evening dress; his tie is still untied.*)

TOMMY. (*Crossing to GRACE*) What's the matter?

GRACE. The vegetable dish of the set mother gave me—that's all.

TOMMY. Broken?

GRACE. No—smashed.

TOMMY. I'm sorry, dear.

GRACE. (*Rises*) What's the use of being sorry, Tommy? I'm sorry, too, but it doesn't help matters. (*Crosses up L.C.*)

TOMMY. (*Ties his tie*) Well, it's always darkest before dawn.

GRACE. So they say. But we've had a long arctic night. (*Crosses to door L.*)

TOMMY. I know, but we are going to have a whole life of sunshine now. (*With a lot of smile.*)

GRACE. (*Comes to TOMMY at C.*) What do you mean?

TOMMY. Well, I don't want to tell you yet. I want to surprise you.

GRACE. Good news?

TOMMY. Huh, huh.

GRACE. You'll surprise me all right. What is it?

TOMMY. (*Crosses up C.*) I'll tell you later. (*He crosses down to her.*)

GRACE. Now.

TOMMY. No, no!

GRACE. (*Pushes TOMMY in chair R. of table L.*) Tommy Tucker, I don't budge from this spot until you tell me what it is! (*Holds TOMMY down.*)

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TOMMY. Well, Grace, we're going to be rich.

GRACE. Tommy! (*Drops on his lap.*)

TOMMY. Yes, we are, Grace!

GRACE. Who died?

TOMMY. Nobody. I'm going to make it myself.

GRACE. Oh, tell me!

TOMMY. Do you remember my telling you about a piece of property they call the Amusement Park?

GRACE. Yes!

TOMMY. Well, for the last six months I have been buying options on all those lots around there until I have gotten control of the whole thing, pretty nearly. I did that because I heard on good authority—You remember me telling you of a fellow named Doane, who used to be secretary to the president of the road?

GRACE. Wait a minute—president of what road?

TOMMY. Of the railroad—Joplin and Missouri railroad—A. J. Frisbee is president of the Joplin and Missouri Railroad.

GRACE. All right! Who is Doane?

TOMMY. Doane was his secretary—and Doane told me that the railroad was going to build a spur line, and that the route they'd take would be right over the property I am telling you about.

GRACE. I don't see it yet.

TOMMY. Well, a railroad can't just go out and be a railroad, can it? They have to have land before they can lay its tracks.

GRACE. I suppose so.

TOMMY. And if they buy the land, they have to buy from the man who owns the land, don't they?

GRACE. I see, I see—you don't have to tell me. Oh, Tommy, you wonderful thing! (*Then doubtfully*) But are you sure they'll buy it?

TOMMY. (*With a smile of great assurance*) Well, here is what I didn't want to tell you—the man who

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is coming here tonight is the purchasing agent for the road.

GRACE. Oh! (*Rises, goes R., takes look at table. The dinner now assumes a greater importance. Fixes a few dishes.*)

TOMMY. (*Rises, crosses to her*) You see, we have had half a dozen talks, and the day before yesterday I gave him a two-day option at a certain price.

GRACE. (*Without looking at him*) Yes?

TOMMY. (*After a pause, during which he has looked at her questioningly, puts her in chair front of table R. and squats in front of her*) You are not paying attention to what I said—I said, the day before yesterday I gave him a two-day option. Don't you see, he's got to say something tonight!

GRACE. How much are you going to charge him, Tommy?

TOMMY. How much do you think?

GRACE. I don't know.

TOMMY. Guess!

GRACE. I couldn't!

TOMMY. A hundred thousand dollars!

GRACE. No—I mean really, Tommy.

TOMMY. That's the price.

GRACE. Oh, Tommy, they'll never pay that!

TOMMY. (*Rises*) Yes, they will, Grace. They want it. If I only had the nerve to hold out, I might get even more for it. (*Finishes tying his necktie.*)

GRACE. (*Rising in ecstasy*) A hundred thousand dollars! (*Crosses L.*) Oh, Tommy, if you get it, it means New York, London, Paris—and clothes! (*Turns to TOMMY.*)

TOMMY. (*Crossing to her*) You bet! We're through with all this economizing. You know now why I haven't said let's buy this, or let's spend that—it was because I needed every cent I could rake and scrape together to buy those options. Do you

know, we haven't one cent to our names at the present moment?

GRACE. No?

TOMMY. Not a cent! I broke the last ten-dollar bill I had this morning. I even took your Liberty Bond, Grace!

GRACE. Tommy—you didn't do that?

TOMMY. Yes, I did, Grace. You said it was there in case of need, and I needed it. You don't mind, do you, dear?

GRACE. No—not if you are going to make a lot of money.

TOMMY. And we are—barrels of it! Barstow—*(Suddenly remembering she is still in her apron)*—say, you hurry and get dressed—they'll be here any moment now. *(Pushing her off.)*

GRACE. Goodness, I forgot all about them. *(She starts for door leading to bedroom, then turns and embraces him.)* Oh, Tommy, I'm so proud of you! *(Exits L.)*

*(HATTIE enters from kitchen, coat and hat on, carries bag—starts L. TOMMY crosses up in front of her.)*

TOMMY. Where are you going?

HATTIE. Home!

TOMMY. *(Swings HATTIE down)* Oh, no, you're not—not yet, anyway!

HATTIE. *(Crying)* I couldn't help it—it jes' slipped out of my hand.

TOMMY. That's all right—but you're not going to leave us—and I know you will be more careful in the future.

HATTIE. I ain't goin' ter be careful no more—no time. *(Goes up to door L.)*

TOMMY. *(Catches her)* You're not?

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HATTIE. No, sir! Every time I'm careful, I don't drap somethin'.

TOMMY. Now, see here—you hang up your hat and coat, and here—*(Taking money from pocket)*—here's a little something extra for you if you'll stay!

HATTIE. Is you sure Mrs. Tucker is going to say it's all right?

TOMMY. Sure of it!

HATTIE. *(Takes money)* All right, I'll stay.

TOMMY. That's the girl! *(HATTIE crosses up R., putting money down neck of dress. TOMMY stands looking after her, suddenly snaps his fingers, then crosses to door of bedroom and calls off. HATTIE stops and listens.)* Grace, oh, Grace!

GRACE. *(Off stage)* Yes?

TOMMY. Where are the cocktail glasses?

GRACE. *(Off stage)* In the sideboard, dear! *(TOMMY goes and gets glasses. GRACE appears in doorway L., in negligee, fixing her hair.)* What do you want them for?

TOMMY. I'm going to make a cocktail.

GRACE. What with?

TOMMY. Haven't we any gin in the house?

GRACE. We have not!

TOMMY. Where is that bottle Nate Allen gave us for a wedding present?

GRACE. Margaret drank it. *(HATTIE at R. of screen, hidden from them, takes package from bag and unwraps it.)*

TOMMY. Margaret?

GRACE. Yes.

TOMMY. Why give it to her?

GRACE. Well, it always put her in a better humor, so I gave it to her—drink by drink.

TOMMY. You mean to say that we haven't anything to drink at all?

GRACE. There is some of that root beer I made.

TOMMY. They wouldn't care for that.

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GRACE. It's very good, Tommy.

TOMMY. I know it, but that's nothing to drink with dinner. (*He stands disappointed. GRACE exits into room L.*)

HATTIE. (*Crosses to c., to TOMMY*) Mr. Tucker, did you-all want some gin? (*Showing him bottle she takes from net bag.*)

TOMMY. Why, Hattie, where did you get that?

HATTIE. I gets it for Mammie—she likes it for her misery. There's a colored gentleman she know what makes it.

TOMMY. I suppose it's all right?

HATTIE. Mammie says it is. She's been drinking gin all her life.

TOMMY. Of course, I'm willing to pay you for this.

HATTIE. You-all were so nice to me about breaking that dish I'd like to help you out.

TOMMY. That's all right.

HATTIE. You-all give me a dollar anyway, and that only stands me sixty-five cents.

TOMMY. Do you know how to make a cocktail, Hattie?

HATTIE. Yessah. I've seen them make them places I have worked—they just squeeze t' half a orange in a good-sized shot of gin and calls it a orange blossom.

TOMMY. Yes, I have heard that, and I've got some oranges there. As neither Mrs. Tucker nor I drink, you can make two a little weaker—better put mostly orange in two of them.

HATTIE. Yes, sir, I'll fix them like the melons—two good and two a little worse. (*Crosses up and exits to kitchen. Bell rings.*)

TOMMY. There they are! (*Goes to door of bedroom, opening it*) Grace, are you almost ready? (*GRACE enters, still in negligee.*)

GRACE. Yes, hurry up. Tommy, get Hattie! (*He*

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*runs to kitchen, exits, returns immediately with HATTIE, brings her down R. and to C. GRACE exits L. and returns immediately with cap and apron. GRACE pins the cap on, while TOMMY ties the apron.)* Now, you show them in, Hattie, and take their things and say we'll be right in. *(HATTIE goes up L.)*

TOMMY. *(To GRACE, as they cross L.)* She looks terrible!

GRACE. I know, but it's too late now. *(Exits with TOMMY. He closes door. HATTIE opens door up L. and MR. BARSTOW stands outside.)*

BARSTOW. Mr. Tucker live here?

HATTIE. Come right in.

BARSTOW. *(Standing in doorway, turns to wife in hall)* This is the place, Kitty. *(MRS. BARSTOW enters, crosses C. BARSTOW comes into room, hangs hat on rack L. of door. HATTIE helps MRS. B. off with her coat, then hands it back to her.)*

HATTIE. Here it is. *(MRS. B. takes wrap and puts it on chair L. of desk.)* You just rest yourselves, the boss will be right here. *(She exits R., taking pitcher and oranges with her.)*

*(BARSTOW crosses down L., sits R. of table L. MRS. BARSTOW starts a survey of the place; brings chair down from desk, peeps behind the screen, and takes in the place generally. Crosses C., sits.)*

BARSTOW. I told you not to expect too much. Pretty little flat, though.

MRS. BARSTOW. *(Looks at the table)* Looks like one of Goldberg's!

BARSTOW. Don't try to use any of that comedy here tonight, because they won't understand it.

MRS. BARSTOW. Don't have to tell me. I know they won't. I've played this town.

BARSTOW. Don't pull any, then.

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MRS. BARSTOW. (*Indicating a picture on wall up L.C.*) Is that her?

BARSTOW. (*In low voice*) I don't know. I never saw her. (*MRS. BARSTOW takes out a cigarette. He rises, crosses to her and snatches it out of her mouth—puts it in his pocket as TOMMY enters from bedroom. MRS. BARSTOW rises.*)

TOMMY. Good evening, Mr. Barstow.

MRS. BARSTOW. (*Aside*) Oh! my God!

BARSTOW. (*Crosses to TOMMY*) Good evening, Mr. Tucker. Are we early?

TOMMY. Not a bit—not a bit.

BARSTOW. My wife, Mr. Tucker—Kitty.

MRS. BARSTOW. How do you do?

TOMMY. Pleased to meet you, I'm sure. (*He crosses to her.*)

BARSTOW. I hope you'll pardon us for not being able to dress—we got home so late.

TOMMY. That's all right! (*Crosses to back of chair R. of table, placing it for her.*) Won't you sit here, Mrs. Barstow? I think you will find it more comfortable.

MRS. BARSTOW. This is all right, thank you. (*She swings chair to face TOMMY, and sits.*) We have just been admiring that pretty girl.

TOMMY. Mrs. Tucker. (*All look up L. of C. at GRACE's picture.*)

MRS. BARSTOW. I thought so. She's stunning.

TOMMY. (*Back of table L.*) Yes, Mrs. Tucker was considered one of the prettiest, if not the prettiest, girl in our home town.

BARSTOW. Have you been married long?

TOMMY. About a year.

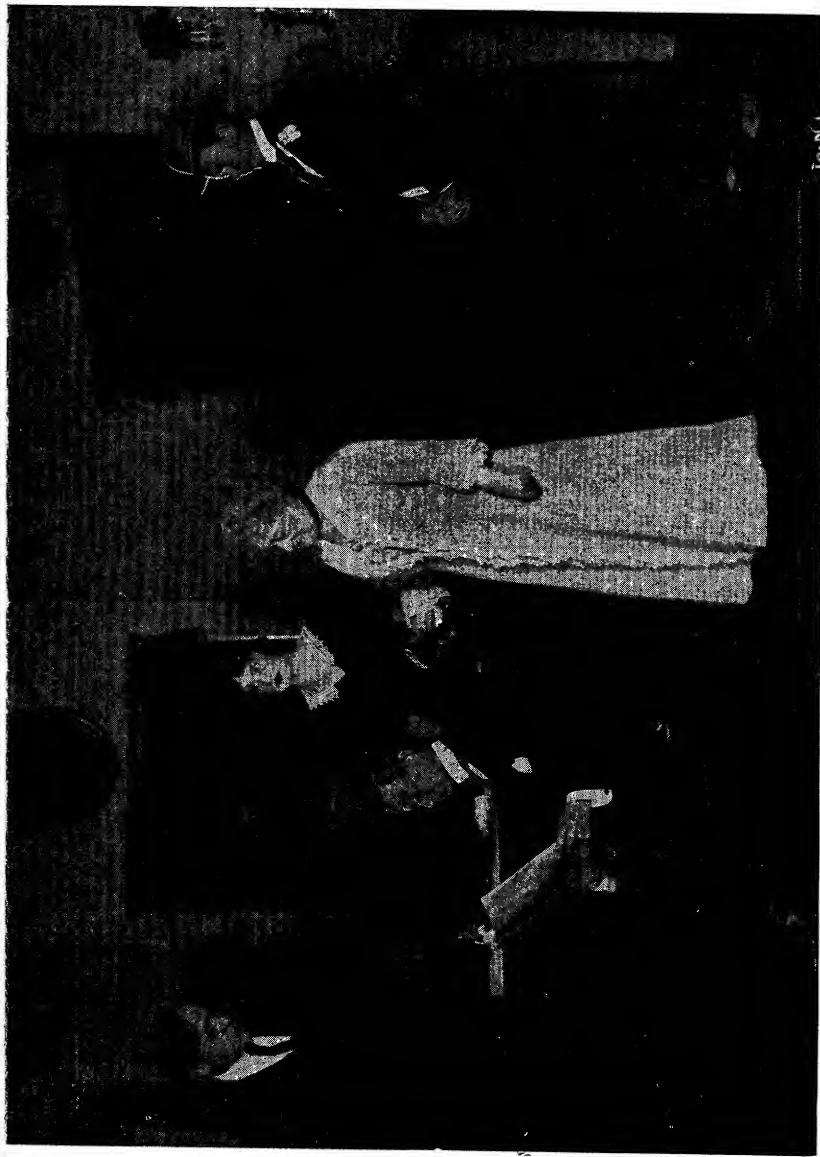
BARSTOW. (*To MRS. BARSTOW, in tone of patronage and meaning TOMMY and GRACE*) Children.

TOMMY. (*Coming down L., not getting his drift*) No, not yet.

MRS. BARSTOW. Ha! ha! (*GRACE enters.*)

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GRACE. (*Crossing to Mrs. BARSTOW, who rises*) I am sorry for keeping you waiting. How do you do, Mrs. Barstow?

TOMMY. This is Mrs. Tucker, Mrs. Barstow.

GRACE. (*Turns to Mrs. BARSTOW*) How do you do, Mrs. Barstow?

TOMMY. And Mr. Barstow. (*There is a general greeting all around.*)

GRACE. I know you must be starved, but I think dinner is all ready. Will you see, Tommy?

TOMMY. One moment—I—er——

Mrs. BARSTOW. Sounds to me like liquor was approaching.

GRACE. Oh, no—I'm so sorry, Mrs. Barstow.

TOMMY. Why, would you care for a cocktail?

Mrs. BARSTOW. Would I care for it? Outside of a string of pearls, there's nothing I'd rather have!

(*HATTIE enters with four cocktails on a tray, comes down R., front of table R.*)

GRACE. But, Tommy, we haven't any gin.

TOMMY. (*Crosses to HATTIE R. of C.—BARSTOW moves L., front of small table*) Which are the mild ones, Hattie? (*GRACE sits on arm of chair R. of table L.*)

HATTIE. (*Pointing to two glasses on tray*) Them two, Mr. Tucker!

TOMMY. (*Takes the stronger two and passes them to Mr. and Mrs. BARSTOW, then the mild one to GRACE.*) You see, as neither my wife nor I drink, I had ours made a little weaker. (*Mrs. BARSTOW sits. HATTIE exits.*)

GRACE. You sly old thing.

TOMMY. At times, dear—at times. (*Crosses up C., passing in front of GRACE.*) You'll pardon me? (*Gets the other cocktails—gives one to GRACE. The*

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*others stand around as though they were about to drink a toast.)*

MRS. BARSTOW. (*Rising*) Well, here's death and destruction to care and worry. (*She drinks.*) My God! I'm poisoned! (*Sits in chair down c.*)

TOMMY. Is it strong?

MRS. BARSTOW. (*Gives glass to TOMMY*) Strong! Boy, where did you get that vitrol?

GRACE. (*Puts glass on table L.*) It is strong, Tommy.

MRS. BARSTOW. It would make a Missouri mule fall over in a faint! (*TOMMY takes glasses and puts them on table L.*)

GRACE. I'm so sorry.

MRS. BARSTOW. (*Looks at BARSTOW—rises*) And will you look at father? (*GRACE takes her chair up c.*)

BARSTOW. (*Smiles, finishing drink*) That's the best drink I have had since I left Texas.

GRACE. (*Coming down R. of MRS. BARSTOW*) I hope the dinner will be better. Tommy, will you take that screen away? (*TOMMY takes screen from table and puts it up c.*) Would you like to remove your hat, Mrs. Barstow?

MRS. BARSTOW. No, thanks, I look funnier with it on!

GRACE. Now, Mrs. Barstow, will you sit here—(*Indicating chair front of table*)—and Mr. Barstow here—(*Indicating chair back of table.*) You see, we're all in one room here.

MRS. BARSTOW. Well, I think that's fine—it's so much more convenient.

TOMMY. Yes, we find it quite comfortable. (*He holds chair for MRS. BARSTOW. MR. BARSTOW, seeing this, does the same for GRACE. They seat themselves, GRACE L., TOMMY R., MRS. BARSTOW down stage and BARSTOW up stage back of table.*)

GRACE. (*Reaches with foot, trying to find buz-*

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zer) Is the buzzer on your side, dear? (TOMMY reaches, trying to find it with his feet—steps on MRS. BARSTOW'S foot. She screams.)

TOMMY. I beg your pardon! (They all look for the buzzer, first TOMMY, then BARSTOW, then GRACE, and last MRS. BARSTOW. Then GRACE finds it and rings. There is a pause; then the door is kicked open and HATTIE enters with a tray with bouillon cups on it. She gets about c., between MRS. BARSTOW and TOMMY, when she catches GRACE'S eye, who shakes her head no—she realizes she has forgotten the melon. She stops, turns about and exits.)

MRS. BARSTOW. Well, that course is all over.

GRACE. Please excuse her. She realizes she had made a mistake.

MRS. BARSTOW. Ah, that's all right, so long as she hasn't left for good. (HATTIE enters with melon, goes between TOMMY and MRS. BARSTOW, in front of whom she puts melon, starts away, realizes her mistake, picks it up and puts it on tray, puts another piece of melon before her, then gives TOMMY the melon she took away from MRS. BARSTOW—then she serves MR. BARSTOW. After serving melon, HATTIE exits. TOMMY eats one spoonful, then takes glass of water to wash taste out. TOMMY'S shirt bulges where there isn't any button; he tries to put it down, but it won't stay. He reaches under vest and pulls it down, then folds arms over it.) Aren't you eating any melon, Mrs. Tucker?

GRACE. No, I'm dieting—just stewed fruits.

MRS. BARSTOW. Dieting? Not for your figure, surely. Gracious, if I had your waist line I'd laugh right out in a diet's face. (Looks over at BARSTOW, who is gobbling up his melon.) Take it easy, Pete—you'll choke yourself.

BARSTOW. (Finishing melon) Ah, that was delicious! I'm very fond of melon. (Looking round to see if there is any more.)

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GRACE. (*Rather embarrassed*) Yes, so many people are.

BARSTOW. (*To change the subject when he finds he isn't going to get any more*) Yes, and corn!

TOMMY. (*Picking this up to cover not offering him more melon*) They raise a good deal of corn around this section, don't they? (GRACE *pushes buzzer.*)

BARSTOW. I don't know. I don't know much about this part of the country. (HATTIE *enters with four soups, puts tray on small table R., collects melon plates—MRS. BARSTOW'S first, then MR. BARSTOW'S, then TOMMY'S; then serves soup—GRACE, then MRS. BARSTOW, then MR. BARSTOW, and TOMMY, and then exits with tray.*)

GRACE. I thought this was your home?

MRS. BARSTOW. No, thank goodness, and I'm not leading any cheering section for the town we live in, either. But this is where they should have had the Federal prison, and just let the prisoners wander about loose.

GRACE. Where is your home?

MRS. BARSTOW. Well, we park our furniture in Toledo. But Pete's business keeps us travelling most of the time.

GRACE. That's what I have always wanted to do.

TOMMY. I've told Grace she should have married a conductor. (*They all laugh.*)

BARSTOW. I stopped at your office today—about three.

TOMMY. I was back shortly after.

BARSTOW. I knew I'd see you tonight.

MRS. BARSTOW. For goodness' sake, don't start talking business, Pete.

GRACE. Oh, do let them, Mrs. Barstow. I think it would be interesting.

MRS. BARSTOW. Well, it isn't. You don't know

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what you are doing when you give Pete a chance like that.

GRACE. Just what do you do, Mr. Barstow?

BARSTOW. I buy all the equipment and properties the railroad has to have. (*Makes a good deal of noise taking soup.*)

GRACE. Oh, I see. And that's what you are doing here—buying property?

BARSTOW. (*To GRACE*) Yes. (*To MRS. BARSTOW*) This soup is delicious, isn't it, dear?

MRS. BARSTOW. Sounds all right to me.

GRACE. You must have Tommy take you out sometime and show you the land he owns, Mr. Barstow. It's really very pretty. (*HATTIE enters with water pitcher she has refilled, places it on small table R., collects soup plates from GRACE, MRS. BARSTOW, then BARSTOW and TOMMY, and exits.*) It would be a lovely place for a station if there was a railroad there.

BARSTOW. Ha, ha! Well, we don't buy property because it's pretty, Mrs. Tucker. A desert might be worth a million dollars, and a garden spot wouldn't be worth a nickel. We buy where we have to. I know your husband's property. I've been over every foot of it.

GRACE. Is that so? Were you thinking of buying it?

BARSTOW. No. I'm past thinking about it. I wasn't going to say anything until after dinner, Tucker, but I might as well tell you now, I'm going to take up that option——

TOMMY. Ah! Ah!

BARSTOW. And at your price! (*Raises his half-empty glass to drink.*)

GRACE. Let me give you a little more water, Mr. Barstow. (*Rises, crosses, gets pitcher from small table R., fills BARSTOW's glass; as she passes TOMMY she takes his hand. Puts water pitcher on table up*

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R. Doorbell rings. GRACE and TOMMY exchange looks. HATTIE enters with plates and chicken on tray, puts chicken and plates in front of TOMMY and exits.)

TOMMY. Who do you suppose that is?

GRACE. It's no one we expect—because there is no one in town we know. (TOMMY about to rise.) I'll go, Tommy! (Gets to door, opens it, and DICK LORING is discovered standing outside.)

DICK. Hello, Grace!

GRACE. Dick! Dick! (DICK enters. GRACE puts her arms around his neck. TOMMY rises, crosses up c. GRACE greets DICK almost affectionately. She is in a delirium of joy over the last speech of BARSTOW's, and this is a vent for her enthusiasm. TOMMY doesn't realize this.) Dick, I am glad to see you! (Drops his hat on desk up L. Brings DICK down by the hand.) Oh, Dick, this is Mrs. Barstow, and Mr. Barstow—Mr. Loring—and Tommy!

DICK. (Acknowledges the introduction, then turns to TOMMY) Hello, Tommy! Well, well, I've never seen you look so funny! (TOMMY goes back of table, starts carving.) Don't let me interrupt you—sit down—do, Mr. Barstow, and go right on with your dinner.

GRACE. Have you had dinner, Dick?

DICK. Yes, thank you. (GRACE crosses to table R., sits.) I had something to eat on the train. I got in about an hour and a half ago.

TOMMY. You didn't waste much time in getting up here.

DICK. No, Tommy, I didn't.

TOMMY. Say, how did you know where we lived?

DICK. Grace's mother gave me the address. I have been home for a week. (HATTIE enters with vegetable dish, places it in front of GRACE and exits.) Now, please don't let me disturb you. (Gets chair from R. of table L., moves it c., sits.) I'll just sit

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here and chat awhile. (TOMMY gives GRACE plate to serve vegetable.)

GRACE. You saw mother, Dick?

DICK. Yes.

GRACE. How was she looking?

DICK. Never better. (TOMMY gives GRACE another plate.)

GRACE. And father?

DICK. Yes. Your uncle was away at some convention of doctors, but they tell me he's very well. (DICK takes cigarette out of case and lights it.)

GRACE. You'll pardon me, Mrs. Barstow, but it's wonderful to have news from home.

MRS. BARSTOW. I know just how you feel.

GRACE. You see, Dick was almost one of the family.

DICK. (With plenty of meaning) Yes, that's right, Grace—almost. (TOMMY sharpens the knife, giving GRACE a look of warning to keep off that subject.)

GRACE. I should have said you were like one of the family. (Eating.) What have you been doing, Dick?

DICK. Well, since I last saw you I have been on the jump. I was down through Arizona for a while, then up in Washington State—British Columbia, and now the railroad has sent me down here.

GRACE. What a thrilling experience!

TOMMY. You don't hold onto your jobs very long, do you?

DICK. No, Tommy, I keep jumping ahead, though. Every new job has been a boost.

BARSTOW. You are in the railroad business, Mr. Loring?

DICK. Yes, sir, construction department.

GRACE. Mr. Barstow is with a railroad, too.

DICK. Really! What road?

BARSTOW. Joplin and Missouri.

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DICK. Oh, that's my road now. I've come on here to be assistant to Becket.

BARSTOW. Oh, of course. I've heard some very fine things about you, Mr. Loring.

GRACE. I'm sure you have. We all knew Dick would give a good account of himself, didn't we, Tommy?

TOMMY. Oh, yes. Nobody would give a better account of *himself* than Dick. (*Passes GRACE last plate for vegetables. GRACE stops eating, looks at TOMMY.*)

DICK. Well, of course, I will admit luck has broken for me. The answer to it is I'm holding down a very good position, and I've had even better offers.

BARSTOW. Yes, you come to us with a reputation of being a pretty good judge where judgment is needed.

DICK. How have you been doing, Tommy?

TOMMY. Oh, I'm making out all right.

GRACE. Making out all right! Why, he's doing splendidly, Dick. Tommy is going to be a very rich man!

DICK. Tommy rich?

GRACE. Hm! Hm!

DICK. Is that so?

GRACE. Yes, Tommy's sold—— (*Turns to tell him.*)

TOMMY. Never mind. Sit around and eat your dinner.

GRACE. Oh, do let me tell him. Tommy has a big piece of property the railroad is going to buy to build a new road.

DICK. For that new spur line?

TOMMY. Yes.

DICK. Good boy, Tommy!

GRACE. Tommy has been awfully clever about it.

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It was an old Amusement Park, and Tommy found out that——

DICK. Amusement Park? Out by Hillsboro?

TOMMY. No, not Hillsboro—Knollwood. Great Scott, Hillsboro is thirty-five miles south of there.

DICK. (*Laughing sarcastically*) Ha! So you are going to sell the railroad property in Knollwood, are you?

TOMMY. Yes. And now that you're with the road, I may charge them more for it. (GRACE gives TOMMY a look of reproach.)

DICK. Is that what you are counting on to make you rich?

TOMMY. Oh, I have other interests.

DICK. I'm glad of that.

GRACE. Why, Dick?

DICK. Because Knollwood's not where the road's to be built at all.

GRACE. (*To DICK*) Oh! (*To TOMMY*) Oh, Tommy!

TOMMY. Oh, what?

GRACE. Did you hear what he said?

TOMMY. Certainly I heard what he said. What does he know about it?

DICK. (*Laughs*) Well, I ought to know something—I'm going to construct it!

BARSTOW. Are you sure of what you're saying, Loring?

DICK. Absolutely!

BARSTOW. If the route's been changed, they have not advised me.

DICK. I don't know anything about that.

BARSTOW. Tucker, have you got the maps? Maybe Loring has the names mixed.

TOMMY. I'll get them for you. (*Rises and goes up to desk c. Opens top and takes out map.*)

DICK. I'll draw you a map of the whole thing. (*Rises, crosses to BARSTOW and sits in TOMMY'S*

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place.) Here—let me show you—— (*Takes an envelope from his pocket and a pencil; draws on envelope.*) Here is Hillsboro—the road comes down this way from Joplin. Now here is the way he thinks it's to be built.

BARSTOW. That's right.

TOMMY. (*Comes down to R. of table*) Now I'll show you——

DICK. (*Rises*) You don't have to show me. I'll bet you a year's salary to the rent of this flat that I'm right.

TOMMY. I wouldn't go betting all my salary if I were you; you may need it.

DICK. Is that so? Well, I'll bet you ten dollars, then.

TOMMY. (*Starts for pocket—realizes he is without funds*) I wouldn't take your money. (*Dick laughs, and goes up to window. Tommy sits—he and Barstow consult maps.*)

GRACE. Don't mind them, Mrs. Barstow. At home they were always like this.

MRS. BARSTOW. What delightful evenings you must have had.

BARSTOW. This knocks me a twister, Loring. Tucker and I had practically concluded negotiations for his property.

DICK. Oh, are you the right-of-way agent?

BARSTOW. Yes.

DICK. Well, I didn't mean to queer your sale, Tommy.

TOMMY. Oh, don't worry.

BARSTOW. (*Dick crosses to C.*) Of course, your gang ought to know where they are going, and what you say makes me hesitate.

TOMMY. I don't mind you hesitating—only remember, your option for this property is up tonight.

DICK. Don't be silly! Tommy, your property

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isn't worth a nickel as far as the railroad is concerned.

TOMMY. Say, what is this—a frame-up?

BARSTOW. What do you mean?

TOMMY. Just what I said. What is Loring to do—tell me this property is no good so you can get it for nothing?

BARSTOW. (*Rising*) That's not the way I work, Mr. Tucker. I try to get all things as reasonable as I can for the interests I represent, but I don't accept the hospitality of any man and try to do him at the same time.

DICK. (*Goes L.*) That's a nice thing to say to a guest.

GRACE. I should say so! Tommy, I'm surprised.

TOMMY. (*A bit ashamed*) I didn't mean to say it. I really shouldn't even have thought it of a guest.

DICK. Oh, that's better. (*Starts to sit.*)

TOMMY. (*To DICK*) But you're *not* a guest!

DICK. No?

TOMMY. No. A guest is somebody who's been invited.

GRACE. Tommy Tucker!

BARSTOW. (*To GRACE*) I think under the circumstances, the best thing for Mrs. Barstow and me to do is—retire! (*Crosses to hatrack—gets hat.*)

GRACE. Please don't! (*MRS. BARSTOW rises.*)

BARSTOW. I really think it's best!

MRS. BARSTOW. (*Crosses up L.*) *He* who must be obeyed. (*Meaning she has no voice in the matter.*)

DICK. As I seem to be a disturbing element, I'll get back to the hotel. (*Crosses up to get hat, helps MRS. BARSTOW with her wrap.*)

TOMMY. (*Crosses down R. to front of table*) I'm sorry, Mr. Barstow!

BARSTOW. Never mind that—this is business.

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(*Crossing to TOMMY*) I'd like to have another day on that option.

TOMMY. No, sir, that option is up tonight.

BARSTOW. Well, I'm not ready to give you an answer now.

TOMMY. I can't help that. I know you want it, and tomorrow it will cost you more.

BARSTOW. Oh, I guess not. (*Crosses up to GRACE.*)

MRS. BARSTOW. Good night, dear girl. I'm sorry. I hope it will come out all right. (*Speech continues*) Good night, Mr. Tucker.

BARSTOW. I'm sorry, Mrs. Tucker, but I think this will make it more comfortable for all of us. Good night!

LORING. Wait a minute, Barstow. I'll go along with you. (*Crosses to GRACE*) I'm sorry, Grace.

GRACE. Tommy has been working very hard lately, and his nerves——

DICK. Oh, I don't mind Tommy. I'll call sometime when he's feeling better. (*Turns to go, then turns to TOMMY*) Good night, Tommy! All right, Barstow! (*Exits with MR. and MRS. BARSTOW. GRACE stands at door for a second, then comes down L., sits L. of table L., starts to cry.*)

TOMMY. (*Crossing to her*) Please don't cry, Grace. What are you crying for?

GRACE. Didn't you say that we hadn't a cent in the world?

TOMMY. Then you don't think this deal is going through?

GRACE. You are just obstinate. Dick says you're wrong.

TOMMY. You mean to say you'd believe him instead of your husband?

GRACE. Yes—(*TOMMY goes R., then up, then down to her*)—when he's talking about his own business.

TOMMY. I don't think that he knows so much about his own business.

GRACE. Oh, yes, he does—otherwise he wouldn't be in the position he is in.

TOMMY. (*Crosses R.*) I don't think he's got such a good position, either.

GRACE. Oh, yes, he has—Mr. Barstow said so, too. It just means we have lost all our little money—(*TOMMY crosses up L.*)—and my Liberty Bond! (*TOMMY stops short.*) You've gone and lost my Liberty Bond! (*TOMMY goes down c.*) You had no right to do that—you know you hadn't.

TOMMY. You said it would be all right.

GRACE. I said it would be all right because you said you were going to make a lot of money. (*Cries.*)

TOMMY. Don't you worry about our not having a lot of money. (*Crosses up c. and then down L.*)

GRACE. But I do. I guess we'll always be just nothing, Tommy—always live in flats. I'll do my own cooking, and make my own dresses, and you'll always wear clothes that don't fit and shirts that bulge in front!

TOMMY. Oh, no, I won't!

GRACE. Yes, you will. And we'll have to put on a brave front to our friends and say, "We're doing very nicely," just as we had to say it to Dick tonight.

TOMMY. How do you know he was telling the truth?

GRACE. Oh, you just sort of know it when a man is really successful. Dick always called you a good insurance agent, but he doesn't think you ought to go in for real estate deals.

TOMMY. (*Crosses to c., bursting with resentment*) Is that so? Well, I am just a little bit tired of hearing what Mr. Loring has to say, and for two pins I'd go over to his hotel and tell him what I think of him! (*Crosses R.*)

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GRACE. Well, you won't.

TOMMY. (*Goes up c.*) No?

GRACE. (*Rises*) No! You've behaved badly enough for one night.

TOMMY. (*Comes down c.*) Well, I don't think you've behaved so very well for a respectable married woman.

GRACE. (*Comes to him*) What did I do?

TOMMY. What did you do? I thought you were going to kiss him when he came in.

GRACE. I don't see what harm there'd have been if I had.

TOMMY. I'll tell you what harm there'd have been—that other vegetable dish would have been busted!

GRACE. (*Goes up L. and sobs in curtain*) Ah!

TOMMY. You'd think if he was such a great friend of ours that he would have kept quiet when he knew I had a business deal on—but he can't do that! No! He has to tell all he thinks he knows! I wish now I'd punched him!

GRACE. (*Comes down L.*) Well, you'd better not—you'd get the worst of it.

TOMMY. (*Goes and sits R. of table L.*) You don't think I'm any good at all, do you, Grace? Do you, Grace?

GRACE. (*Goes back of him, then front to L.*) You're tired, Tommy. What you need is sleep. You'd better come to bed.

TOMMY. I'm all right.

GRACE. Come on! (*Goes to door L.*)

TOMMY. No. I'm not going to bed!

GRACE. What are you going to do?

TOMMY. I don't know. I may go out. (*Pause.*)

GRACE. Out where?

TOMMY. What difference does it make to you? Maybe it would be better if I went out and never come back! At least you would have an insurance!

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GRACE. Tommy! (*Puts chair up back of her.*) Don't you talk that way—I won't have it!

TOMMY. Well, that's better than living with a man who can't support you. That's one way a fellow can make money for his wife—even a boob!

GRACE. Stop it, I say!

TOMMY. (*Realizing that he is on a topic that hurts*) Maybe you'd rather have me wait until I take out another policy—enough to take you to London or Paris—— (*GRACE rushes off L. TOMMY rises, goes to door L., speaks off*) You know some day I'll surprise you with the money I'll have. (*He crosses to table, drinks cocktail, returns to door.*) I'll show you I can be just as successful as Dick Loring! (*Goes to c., front of table, then back to door.*) I'll bet he'll be around some day trying to borrow money from me—and I'd like to see him get it—that's all! (*Goes c., back to table, then back to door.*) That's what always makes a hit with you women—all a fellow's got to do is to put on a suit of clothes that's pressed and talk big, and he can make you think he is president of the road. (*GRACE slams the door on him. He goes c., thinking, then goes to table R., sits, looks at map.*) I know darn well that railroad is coming my way! (*Tears up DICK'S envelope and examines map in disgust.* *GRACE enters with bag and umbrella, her hat and coat on. TOMMY looks at her in astonishment. GRACE puts bag and umbrella on chair, starts putting on her gloves.*) Where are you going?

GRACE. I'm going home!

TOMMY. (*Crossing to her*) You—why—— Don't be silly!

GRACE. I'm not silly! I can't stand it, Tommy. If I stay here any longer, my nerves will just go like that—— (*Snaps finger.*) That's all. I'm going to get that nine-twenty train and go home.

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TOMMY. You take those things off, because you are not going to do any such thing.

GRACE. I'm not, eh?

TOMMY. No, you're not. You're not going to leave this house.

GRACE. What did you say?

TOMMY. I said you'll not leave this—flat.

GRACE. Who's going to prevent me?

TOMMY. I am!

GRACE. Oh, no, you're not.

TOMMY. I'm not, eh? Well, you try and see!  
(GRACE picks up bag and umbrella, starts for door.  
TOMMY gets in front of her.) Now, Grace, don't be silly!

GRACE. Get out of my way, please! (TOMMY still blocks her way. She pushes him and again tries to make the door. He gets her by the wrist and holds her, and they struggle.) Don't! Don't you hold me that way, Tommy Tucker! You're hurting me!

TOMMY. (Releases her) I didn't mean to hurt you, but you shouldn't have tried to go out of that door when I told you not to!

GRACE. You are not to give orders to me!

TOMMY. It's that fellow Loring that's gotten you upset, and I'm not going to give him the chance to break up our home!

GRACE. Dick Loring has nothing to do with it at all, and don't you even dare suggest it! I have tried to be everything a wife should be to you, but you're just impossible, that's all, and I want to go home to my mother! (Crosses down, sits in chair L.)

TOMMY. The trouble with you is that you're train crazy. There isn't one good reason in the world for your acting like this, except that you want to go some place. (Crosses R.)

GRACE. That's just about as sensible as most things you say.

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TOMMY. Well, it's so. You wouldn't marry me unless we left town. The moment I tell you I'm going to make a little bit of money, your first thought is getting on board a boat or a train, and travelling some place. You can't stay still for five minutes!

GRACE. (*Drops bag and umbrella*) I can't stay still? I've stayed still in this stuffy little flat, in this dirty little city, with no one to talk to and nothing to do but cook and sew for you, for eleven months!

TOMMY. Well, I never wanted to come to Joplin!

GRACE. Yes, you did! You said you could do business here. Well, you have done it—and a fine business you have done! A master-stroke!

TOMMY. If you'd keep quiet for one minute, I'd like to have one last word with you. Of course, I don't expect to get it. (*GRACE picks up bag and umbrella, rises, goes to door.*) You understand this—if you go out of that door, you and I are through!

GRACE. Of course we are!

TOMMY. I mean it.

GRACE. I hope you do—so do I! (*Opens door.*) Good-bye!

TOMMY. Good-bye! (*GRACE exits. TOMMY stands for a moment, listening.*) My God, she did it! (*He sees cocktail on table, and drinks it at a gulp. Takes off coat, throws it on chair L. of desk.*) All right. Let's see how far she'll go with it! I'll bet I can be just as obstinate as she is. (*He is now showing a little effect and begins talking to an imaginary GRACE.*) If you had said to me—Tommy, you are wrong—Tommy, you are all wrong, very likely I'd have said, I know it, Grace, I know it! But not when you speak to me the way you did. Let me ask you something—haven't I been a good husband? I've tried to be thoughtful and considerate. I haven't even looked at another woman! I couldn't have thrown my arms around a man who wasn't my

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husband, if I'd been a wife, the way you did! I wouldn't do that! But *you* did, you did, and that's what hurts—it hurts me here. You don't know how it hurts me, Grace! (*He takes cocktail and drinks a little of it. Goes down L. HATTIE enters from kitchen.*)

HATTIE. I've been waiting for the longest time for the bell to ring!

TOMMY. The bell's rung and they've counted ten—and everybody's out! (*Starts to drink cocktail.*)

HATTIE. Lordy, Mr. Tucker, don't drink that cocktail!

TOMMY. Why not?

HATTIE. That's warm standin' all this time. Let me stir you up another one. (*Starts R.*)

TOMMY. All right, Hattie, stir me up another. (*HATTIE exits into kitchen. Calls after her*) Hattie, Hattie! Stir me up a lot of them. (*Goes up c. to phonograph, puts on a record, and winds it.*) You stir up the cocktails, Hattie, and we'll put on a record and show them that we don't care—— (*Doorbell rings. TOMMY gives one triumphant look.*) Now, Tommy, just remember—she's only a woman—and forgive her. (*Goes to door, throws it open, and BARSTOW stands outside.*) Oh!

BARSTOW. What's the matter—has Mrs. Tucker retired?

TOMMY. Yes, Mrs. Tucker's retired! (*Crosses to back of chair, L. of table R.*)

BARSTOW. Would I disturb her? I really would like to see you.

TOMMY. All right. Come in! (*BARSTOW comes down c., sits R. of table L. HATTIE enters with pitcher, stirring contents with a spoon.*) Hattie, get a glass for Mr. Barstow. (*HATTIE gives pitcher to him, gets glass from closet down R., puts it on table and exits R.*) I'm just having a little drink! (*He crosses to back of table L.*)

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BARSTOW. So I notice!

TOMMY. What's your little trouble?

BARSTOW. It's about that transaction of ours. Now, I want to put my cards on the table with you, Mr. Tucker—be fair and aboveboard.

TOMMY. Certainly.

BARSTOW. A week ago I was commissioned to get that piece of land you own. I have been dickering with you all the time because I wanted to get it as cheap as possible.

TOMMY. Nacherly. (*Drinks.*)

BARSTOW. When Loring made the statement he did tonight, I had a feeling he was wrong, and yet it seemed to me, as he was in the construction end of the game, he ought to know what he was talking about.

TOMMY. (*Stops drinking, and silencing BARSTOW with a gesture*) Listen, Pete, I've known that fellow longer than you have, and he's never known what he's talking about.

BARSTOW. Well, he didn't tonight! I thought possibly the plans had been switched, and that somehow they had muffed advising me. But I got Frisbee, the president, on the 'phone the moment I left here, and what he said about your friend Loring—

TOMMY. He's no friend of mine! Whateesay?

BARSTOW. Said what the hell would Loring know about his plans! That when he was trying to build railroads he wasn't in the habit of telling every underling what he intended doing!

TOMMY. Did he call him an underling?

BARSTOW. That's the mildest thing he called him!

TOMMY. (*Pours out drink, chuckling to himself, goes down L., sits*) Underling! I gotter remember that—it's a good 'un——

BARSTOW. So that arrangement of ours is all right.

TOMMY. Is that so? Who told you all that?

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BARSTOW. Well, isn't it? You agreed to sell!

TOMMY. And you agreed to buy, but you re-nigged!

BARSTOW. Oh, no, I didn't! I went out to telephone and see if you weren't right.

TOMMY. Not if I weren't—if Loring was.

BARSTOW. Well, put it that way.

TOMMY. Yes, if he had been, you'd have said the deal's all off, and as long as he wasn't, I say the deal's all off!

BARSTOW. You gave me your word you'd sell at a price, and I think you ought to stand on your word. Now, here is a certified check—— (*Rises, goes above table, takes check out of pocketbook, which he gets from inside pocket.*) I brought with me tonight for twenty-five thousand dollars. (*He hands check to TOMMY.*) That ought to be proof enough of my intentions when I came here——

TOMMY. When you came here—yes.

BARSTOW. Well, I'll give you the other seventy-five thousand when the deeds are made over.

TOMMY. That's only a hundred thousand.

BARSTOW. Well, that was your price.

TOMMY. That was my price, but when you left so suddenly, the price jumped fifty thousand dollars. (*Puts check on BARSTOW's hat, that is on table, takes a drink.*)

BARSTOW. I won't pay it.

TOMMY. You won't, eh?

BARSTOW. No! (*Picks up check, puts on hat, puts check in inside pocket.*) That's the best you'll do?

TOMMY. (*Rises*) What time is it?

BARSTOW. (*Takes out watch*) Not quite nine o'clock!

TOMMY. (*Looks at watch*) That's right. It's nearer tomorrow than when I made you the proposition, so I'll compromise with you—it's a hundred and twenty-five thousand.

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BARSTOW. But I say——

TOMMY. Want it? Because if you don't, I'll take it out and sell it to someone who will sting you good.

BARSTOW. All right, a hundred and twenty-five thousand.

TOMMY. All right!

BARSTOW. All right.

TOMMY. (*Goes front of table L. and up C. to desk*—BARSTOW takes out check, puts it on table) And so we won't have any more complications, I'll tell you what to do—you put your proposition on paper, and to-morrow—(*Coming back to BARSTOW with pen and paper*)—when I feel better, and something tells me I won't, I'll write you an acceptance.

BARSTOW. Well, that's not exactly the way——

TOMMY. You want it?

BARSTOW. (*Sitting and writing*) You're a tough customer to do business with.

TOMMY. I'm a smart business man. The trouble with me is I don't drink enough. (*Takes another drink.*) You think I'm smart?

BARSTOW. I think you are!

TOMMY. You bet your life I am! I'm going to be rich! I'm going to have a great big house with lots of servants, and a railroad track running all round it and an engine and pullman car, so my wife can go out and travel any time she wants to. All my clothes are going to fit me—the only thing I'll wear that won't be made to order will be an umbrella.

BARSTOW. (*Extends a note*) There—look that over.

TOMMY. (*Examines note critically*) Seems perfectly all right.

BARSTOW. (*Pointing*) And there's your check. (*Crosses up to door.*) I'll see you in the morning.

TOMMY. Not too early! (*Picks up check.*)

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BARSTOW. Good night!

TOMMY. Say, tell the president to take the extra twenty-five thousand dollars out of the underling's salary.

BARSTOW. I'll bet he'll feel like taking it out of his hide—I do! (*Exits up L., closing door.*)

TOMMY. Twenty-five thousand! Loring will have to work fourteen years for that. (*Chuckles.*) Grace thinks I'm not as smart as he is, but when I tell her about this— (*Realizes and stops.*) Now, you see, that goes and spoils everything— (*Remembers phonograph, goes up and starts it—Tosti's "Good-Bye."*) HATTIE enters from kitchen, comes to where TOMMY is standing.)

HATTIE. I'm going home now.

TOMMY. All right. (*Comes down c. and pushes armchair into place.*)

HATTIE. (*Comes down c.*) Does you all want to pay me now?

TOMMY. How much is it?

HATTIE. Dollar and a half!

TOMMY. (*Offering her money*) There's a five!

HATTIE. I ain't got no change for that.

TOMMY. I don't want any change—that's for you—I'm a rich man, Hattie.

HATTIE. (*Takes money, crosses back of him up c.*) You don't act like one. Still, I thanks you kindly. You better not let Mrs. Tucker know that, though.

TOMMY. Mrs. Tucker wouldn't care, Hattie—Mrs. Tucker has left me!

HATTIE. What are you saying to me?

TOMMY. It's true. (*HATTIE is c.*) See that? That's a check for twenty-five thousand dollars.

HATTIE. What?

TOMMY. Twenty-five thousand dollars—certified.

HATTIE. Um—m-m-m-m-m!

TOMMY. And I'd give that to Mrs. Tucker to do



what she pleased with it if she were here—but she's gone—she left me.

HATTIE. That's too bad, Mr. Tucker. (*Starts for door.*)

TOMMY. Wait a minute, Hattie. (*HATTIE stops.*) When we were married, everybody said the first year of married life was the toughest time two people could go through, and I didn't think they knew what they were talking about, but they were right, Hattie—it is—it is!

HATTIE. Yes, Mr. Tucker. (*Starts for door again.*)

TOMMY. Wait a minute, Hattie. (*HATTIE stops.*) Are you married?

HATTIE. Not yet.

TOMMY. Are you gonner be?

HATTIE. I got an offer!

TOMMY. Well, then, you take a tip from an old married man, Hattie—don't you get married until the second year.

HATTIE. Yes, Mr. Tucker. (*Exits.*)

TOMMY. (*Gets GRACE's picture from desk, goes down, sits in chair down c., mumbling*) Silly girl! Silly girl! (*He holds check before the photo to show GRACE what she has lost. As he sits, the phonograph gets to the words, "Good-bye forever." TOMMY looks up stage at it, kisses GRACE's picture and puts it up to his face as the curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN

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### ACT III

SCENE: *Same as Act I. Five days later than Act II.*

*It is ten-thirty Sunday morning. Sunlight streams in from porch window R.*

*GRACE is discovered in armchair L. of table R., writing a letter.*

*As curtain rises she is writing furiously. She sobs at something she has written, looks about table for her handkerchief, finds it on the floor at her feet, wipes her eyes, calms herself and begins writing again. Finishes letter, collects six sheets from table and arranges them in order, begins reading what she has written.*

*She reads first sentence, thinks, gets pen, scratches something out, reads again. The next sentence seems even worse. She suddenly springs up and tears letter up, goes up stage and throws pieces in fireplace, comes back to table, gets another sheet, picks up pen, dips it in ink, then pauses, thinking how to make another beginning, then throws down pen, sinks her head in her arm on the table and sobs.*

*Church bell rings.*

*After a moment she hears someone coming, rises quickly, grabs book from table R., goes front of table to couch R.C., sits, pretends to read.*

*MRS. LIVINGSTON enters from upstairs. She is dressed for church, and carries hat, gloves and cloak. She puts them on chair L. of C., sees table is untidy with GRACE'S writing things, goes*

*down to straighten it up. Sees GRACE, stops and looks at her.*

*The church bell rings every fifteen seconds until after GRACE'S exit.*

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I thought you were upstairs, getting ready.

GRACE. I'm not going to church, mother.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Surprised*) Why not?

GRACE. Oh, I don't feel like it.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. You ought to come, Grace—what'll folks think? (*Looks at GRACE, takes up writing pad, goes up to desk R. of door c., puts it away.*)

GRACE. I can't help what they think—and I've—I've got a letter to write.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. To Tommy?

GRACE. Yes.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, I don't like your staying away from church on your first Sunday home. (*She pauses, looks at GRACE, who is pretending to read, then goes up c. and calls upstairs*) Fred—Fred!

LIVINGSTON. (*Off stage*) Eh? What do you want?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. The first bell, dear.

LIVINGSTON. (*Off stage*) What?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. The church bell.

LIVINGSTON. All right. We've got half an hour yet.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Comes back into room and again regards GRACE, coming down R. of c.*) You don't expect Tommy today, then?

GRACE. I don't know.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Sits L. of table R.*) You wouldn't stay home from church to write to him if you thought he was coming today, would you?

GRACE. Yes—if I wasn't sure!

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MRS. LIVINGSTON. But you said you were sure he'd be here before this.

GRACE. (*Rises, crosses to window R., stands looking out*) Yes, I thought so. I expected him to—to follow me.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. That was five days ago. If I were you I would be worried to death.

GRACE. (*Trying to restrain her irritation, crosses up and looks out French windows*) It's probably the business about all that land he bought—that's keeping him!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. You don't think he's lost money on that land, do you, Grace?

GRACE. (*Breaking out*) I don't know, Mother. (*Throws book on sofa R., crosses L.*) You can ask him when he comes.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Also angry*) I mean to. I can't seem to get anything out of you.

GRACE. (*Crosses to R. of C. to Mrs. Livingston, fighting down her feelings and speaking quietly*) What is it you want to know?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Still angry*) I'd like to know why you reached home at three o'clock in the morning, and why you've kept in the house the whole week, and why you're so dumb about all that's happened since you've lived in Joplin.

GRACE. Haven't I told you—and told you—and told you—(*With growing emphasis*)—that I missed my connection at St. Louis! I didn't let you know I was coming because I thought it would be fun to surprise you, and I've stayed in the house because I'm not feeling well. And I think it's just horrid of you to keep on asking me questions all the time, and if I'm not welcome in my own parents' home—I can leave! (*She runs crying out of the room, upstairs C. Stop chimes. Mrs. Livingston looks after her in great perplexity, goes to up C., looks after her, starts down C. and L. Livingston enters, dressed*

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*for church, comes down to his chair by table and looks around for papers.)*

LIVINGSTON. Ain't the Sunday papers come yet?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I haven't seen them. Are you ready?

LIVINGSTON. For what?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I say, are you ready for church?

LIVINGSTON. Don't you see I am? (*Shows her handkerchief in coat pocket.*) I wonder why they haven't left the papers. I'm going to call them up. (*Goes up L. of C., gets 'phone book, brings it down to stool front of table R., and sits.*) What's the fellow's name that keeps the news-stand?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Who has her mind on GRACE*) Fred——

LIVINGSTON. (*Turns pages of 'phone book*) Fred—F, F, F—Fr—that ain't his name—it's Henry—Henry Washburn—W, W, W——

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Fred! (*LIVINGSTON is looking through book.*) I'm terribly worried about Grace—and I need your help!

LIVINGSTON. Ah! Washburn—Main, three, two, three, ring three. (*Crosses up to 'phone, rings bell, takes off receiver.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Crosses up to R. of him*) Grace didn't tell us the truth when she came home, Fred—I'm sure she didn't!

LIVINGSTON. (*Into 'phone*) Hello! I want three, three—two—three ring—what the hell did I say that number was? (*Comes down, gets book and sits front of table.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Crosses to L. of him, puts book down with her hand*) Now you sit still and listen to me!

LIVINGSTON. What have I done now?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Nothing, dear——

LIVINGSTON. Oh!

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MRS. LIVINGSTON. But I need your help—I'm worried—— (LIVINGSTON *starts looking through book again*)—about Tommy and Grace. (*She takes book away and places it on table back of him.*) I say I'm worried about——

LIVINGSTON. I heard you. When that Italian delivered the papers we used to get them right after breakfast.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Sits L. of table R.*) They've lost all their money, Fred—I'm sure of it.

LIVINGSTON. Who?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Tommy and Grace!

LIVINGSTON. What! What makes you think they're broke?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Because Grace hasn't one new thing to her back.

LIVINGSTON. Well, why should she? When she got married you had me buy her enough clothes to last a lifetime.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Grace would never come home without wearing something new if she had any money.

LIVINGSTON. Well, what did you expect? What chance would Tommy have in a strange place? I knew just what would happen.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, it's your duty to help them, dear.

LIVINGSTON. Do you mean, give them money?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. What we must do, Fred, is to get them back here.

LIVINGSTON. What—to live on me?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Yes, at first, then you can buy Tommy's old business.

LIVINGSTON. What!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. He did well at it before Grace married him, and he could again.

LIVINGSTON. That's so—maybe he might. Any-

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way, he'd make a fourth at bridge without sending out for the neighbors.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Yes, and you like to play bridge with Tommy.

LIVINGSTON. All right.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Now, I want you to talk to Grace.

LIVINGSTON. Good Lord, can't you talk to her? You know her better than I do.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. But everything I say seems to irritate her.

LIVINGSTON. Does it? Oh, all right. *(Rises, crosses up to back of table R., gets cigar, lights it.)*

MRS. LIVINGSTON. *(Rises, crosses up to c. arch, calls upstairs)* Grace! Grace!

GRACE. *(Off stage, upstairs)* Yes, Mother?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Grace, your father wants to talk to you. *(Comes down c.)* Now, you must be careful of Grace's feelings, Fred.

LIVINGSTON. I know what to say.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. You let her know we want to be a help, and——

LIVINGSTON. Are you going to do this or am I?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I'll be in the kitchen if you want me. *(Starts L.)*

LIVINGSTON. What do I want you for?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. All right, dear. *(Exits L. LIVINGSTON crosses down R., sits in chair L. of table R., takes 'phone book and reads it. GRACE enters c. and stands inside doorway watching him. He does not notice her.)*

GRACE. *(Watching him for some time)* Well, father?

LIVINGSTON. What is it?

GRACE. Here I am.

LIVINGSTON. What of it?

GRACE. *(Crosses down c.)* I thought you wanted to see me?

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LIVINGSTON. Well, I do. (*Smokes thoughtfully.*)

GRACE. (*After giving him a chance to continue*)  
What did you want to see me about?

LIVINGSTON. What's the trouble with you and Tommy?

GRACE. Trouble? What makes you think there is any trouble?

LIVINGSTON. Oh, you don't fool me. Tommy's broke, isn't he?

GRACE. Where did you hear that?

LIVINGSTON. Hear what?

GRACE. That Tommy had lost his money.

LIVINGSTON. I didn't have to be told. It's all your fault for making him go away. If you had had a grain of sense you might have known the chances were all against Tommy making a success in a place where he didn't know anybody.

GRACE. (*Turns away to the L.*) I suppose I should.

LIVINGSTON. Of course you should. If you hadn't been so darned anxious to leave town, Tommy would have been all right.

GRACE. I dare say he would.

LIVINGSTON. I know he would. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. You send for Tommy to come home, and I'll buy back his old business for him.

GRACE. I can't do that, father.

LIVINGSTON. Do what?

GRACE. Ask Tommy to come back.

LIVINGSTON. (*Rises, crosses to GRACE*) Now, look here—I didn't see you married with any idea of your leaving your husband and coming back for me to support.

GRACE. Stop, father. Don't you say another word— (*DR. ANDERSON enters C. He has an overcoat on, hangs hat in hall, and carries a good-sized travelling-bag, and has a roll of papers under*

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*his arm; he drops the bag, and drops papers on chair L. of table R.)* I'll never ask you to support me—and I won't stay in this house another day—do you understand? Not another day!

DR. ANDERSON. (*Crosses to GRACE*) Here, here, here—what's all this?

GRACE. Oh! Oh, Uncle Myron!

DR. ANDERSON. Why, Gracie, what on earth is the matter? (*GRACE throws her arms around his neck and bursts into violent sobbing. The Doctor holds her, patting her gently on the shoulder, and trying to soothe her.*)

LIVINGSTON. (*With a good deal of concern, which he tries to conceal*) Get her to stop that, will you, Myron? (*GRACE cries.*) I didn't think I was going to upset her like that. (*GRACE cries.*) Tell her I didn't mean it. (*Sits in chair, then feels to see what he is sitting on; rises, finds papers, a broad smile comes over his face, takes papers, sits and reads.*)

DR. ANDERSON. There, there, Gracie, take it easy. (*He takes her to settee.*) Goodness, I've never heard you cry like this before in my life.

GRACE. (*Speaking between sobs with great difficulty*) Oh, Uncle, I'm so glad you're back—so glad!

DR. ANDERSON. So am I! Now, what is it, Gracie? Tell me all about it.

GRACE. There was something I wanted to tell you! I wanted to tell you when I came home, but you weren't here.

DR. ANDERSON. What is it, Gracie? (*GRACE whispers in his ear.*) God bless you, Gracie! (*MRS. LIVINGSTON enters from L.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Why, Myron, when did you get here?

DR. ANDERSON. Just this moment. (*GRACE cries.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. What's the matter?

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DR. ANDERSON. Oh, nothing. Gracie's a little upset, that's all.

GRACE. I'm all right now.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Crosses up c., looking from one to the other and deciding not to refer to GRACE'S crying; goes c., giving LIVINGSTON a cutting look, blaming him for upsetting GRACE; turns to Doctor.*) Did you have a good time, Myron?

DR. ANDERSON. (*Talking easily to MRS. LIVINGSTON, but keeping his arm around GRACE and stroking her hair*) Oh, the usual sort. These Doctors' Conventions are all alike, everything crowded, poor accommodations, and a lot of sitting around listening to old fogies talk.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. I imagine you did your share.

DR. ANDERSON. (*Smiling*) No—the Convention only lasted a week.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Well, we'd begun to get worried about you.

DR. ANDERSON. Why was that?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. The Convention was over Thursday. We expected you home two days ago.

DR. ANDERSON. Oh! Well, I should have been, but I stopped off to make a visit.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Where?

DR. ANDERSON. Joplin. (*GRACE rouses up suddenly and looks at him.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Joplin! Did you see Tommy?

DR. ANDERSON. (*Casually*) Oh, yes. (*To GRACE*) I went there to call on you both—I didn't know you'd come home, Grace.

GRACE. (*Wondering how much the Doctor knows, and trying to speak easily*) Did you—did you find Tommy all right?

DR. ANDERSON. Well, no—I didn't.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Looking at him suddenly*) What?

DR. ANDERSON. I had a good deal of trouble be-

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THE FIRST YEAR



fore I could find him at all. (GRACE *sits back and stares at him.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. What do you mean?

DR. ANDERSON. Well, the apartment was closed when I arrived. I asked the people across the hall if they knew where the Tuckers were, and all they could tell me was that on Tuesday they'd seen a doctor going in there.

GRACE. A doctor?

DR. ANDERSON. Yes. I got the doctor's name, called him up, and learned that he had taken Tommy to a hospital! (GRACE *springs up suddenly with a little stifled scream.*)

DR. ANDERSON. (*Rises quickly*) There, there, Gracie, it's all right—nothing to worry about at all. He isn't in any danger.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. But what was it, Myron?

DR. ANDERSON. (*Easily*) Poisoning—the doctor thought.

GRACE. Not—not suicide?

DR. ANDERSON. Oh, no, no—just something he'd eaten or drunk!

GRACE. (*Goes up L. to bookcase*) Where's a timetable?

DR. ANDERSON. (*Secretly pleased*) Now, don't let it upset you, Grace. He isn't in any danger at all.

GRACE. (*Finds timetable, comes down between Doctor and Mrs. LIVINGSTON, sits on settee L., trying to find the page*) But I've got to get to him—I've got to! You know all about it, don't you, Uncle?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Know about what?

GRACE. My leaving him!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. What?

GRACE. Yes, that's the truth, mother.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. You quarrelled—with Tommy?

GRACE. Not quarrelled—*fought!* And then we

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separated—forever. And I was a miserable wretch to do it. (*Turns over leaves of timetable.*) Because Tommy'd just had a great disappointment, and lost everything! And I'd no right to leave him at a time like that. And I'm ashamed of myself, and I'm going back and tell him so—that's what I'm going to do—five-fifty-seven. (*Goes over pages.*)

LIVINGSTON. (*Looking up from paper, very loud*) Well, I'll be damned!

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Fred!

LIVINGSTON. Well, I will. Did you see this?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. We can't be bothered about the paper now.

LIVINGSTON. It's about Tommy! (*GRACE rises, goes up c.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. In the paper?

LIVINGSTON. Yes.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Read it.

LIVINGSTON. Local boy makes a coup! (*He pronounces it "kowp."*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Makes a what?

LIVINGSTON. Well, then—coop, or whatever you call it—it's French for clean-up.

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Read it!

LIVINGSTON. (*Reading*) "The Joplin and Missouri Railroad has purchased Amusement Park and will at once start laying tracks for its new line. The largest price paid to any one holder was one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, to Thomas Tucker of Reading. Thomas Tucker is the son-in-law of our distinguished fellow citizen, Mr. Frederick Livingston." (*Gives paper to MRS. LIVINGSTON, leans back in chair, puffing cigar with great pomp. GRACE goes R. and back of table R. Doctor gets up c.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Looking at article in the paper*) Ain't that wonderful? I always said that Tommy was a smart boy!

LIVINGSTON. So did I.

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MRS. LIVINGSTON. I hope it's all true.

DR. ANDERSON. Oh, it's true, sister—no doubt about that.

LIVINGSTON. This paper generally gets things right. (*Doctor starts up to door.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Where are you going, Myron?

DR. ANDERSON. I'll be back in a few minutes. (*Exits c.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. Tommy rich! I suppose they'll never live in Reading now. (*Church chimes start and ring every fifteen seconds until Mr. and Mrs. LIVINGSTON exit.*) That's the last bell. (*Crosses up c., gets hat, throws paper in the chair up c.,*

LIVINGSTON. (*Rises, goes up back of table. To GRACE*) A hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Well, you picked a fine time for a fight with him. (*Goes out in hall for hat.*)

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Crosses to GRACE*) Did you find a train, dear?

GRACE. No!

LIVINGSTON. (*Coming in c.*) I'll look 'em up for you when we get back from church.

GRACE. You needn't—I'm not going. (*Going down R.*)

LIVINGSTON. What?

MRS. LIVINGSTON. (*Simultaneously with Mr. LIVINGSTON*) Not going? (*Alone*) Why not?

GRACE. Because I can't. I left him when I thought he'd failed—do you think I can go back now?

LIVINGSTON. (*Who has got his hat, holds cloak for Mrs. LIVINGSTON, which he gets from back of chair up c.*) Oh, don't be so damned silly! Here, Emily! (*Holds out the cloak.*)

GRACE. Silly! To always have him feel that I came back because he'd made money! (*Mrs. LIVINGSTON crosses to Mr. LIVINGSTON up c., puts cloak on.*)

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LIVINGSTON. If you're so shy about going back—I'll go myself. I'd like to see Joplin anyhow. (*Taking MRS. LIVINGSTON by the arm and going out door c.*) Come on, Emily. Don't forget—hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars—Amusement Park—they'll be asking all about it at church. (*Exits with MRS. LIVINGSTON. Door bell. GRACE stands for a while in thought, then sits on sofa. When she hears voices in the hall she rises, thinking her father is speaking to TOMMY. Off stage.*) Well, well, when did you get back to town? You'll find Grace right in the parlor—try and get her to come to church. (*DICK enters, looks at GRACE a moment, comes down c.*)

DICK. Hello, Grace!

GRACE. (*Her expression changes to disappointment at it not being TOMMY*) Oh, hello, Dick. I didn't know you were home. (*Comes to stool in front of table, sits.*)

DICK. (*Sits L. of table R.*) I got in last night. I suppose you know why I'm back?

GRACE. No.

DICK. I lost my job with the railroad.

GRACE. (*Sympathetically*) Dick—you didn't.

DICK. Yes, on account of what I said about that spur line.

GRACE. I'm sorry, Dick.

DICK. It wasn't my fault. (*Rises, goes L.*) They told me at the office that spur was going just where I said it was. (*Comes back to her.*) I'd rather not have it known around town—you know the way they talk, and came over to ask if you'd tell Tommy not to speak of it—will you?

GRACE. Dick, Tommy and I have separated!

DICK. Not really!

GRACE. (*Almost breaking down*) Yes.

DICK. (*Sits L. of table R.*) You don't say.

GRACE. You haven't seen Tommy again, then?



DICK. Not since that night. Why?

GRACE. He said something that made me think he might see you again. Dick, do you think that on the night you called I received you with more enthusiasm than I should?

DICK. Well, you couldn't have been too cordial to suit me.

GRACE. But you didn't misunderstand my welcome—you knew it was just friendly?

DICK. Of course. What are you trying to find out?

GRACE. I was wondering if I had given Tommy cause to be annoyed. He was jealous of the way I met you.

DICK. Oh, I see.

GRACE. Tommy accused me of lots of things that night—*(Rises)*—of just everything. Why, I have never been spoken to in my life the way he talked to me.

DICK. *(Rises)* Well, I don't know as I blame Tommy much for being jealous of you, Grace. Of course, there are ways to handle a woman, and Tommy hasn't had enough experience to know. It's too bad, because if ever a girl deserved an ace—you do! *(He puts his hands on GRACE's arms and stands looking at her as TOMMY appears in doorway. He is dressed in a cutaway coat, grey trousers, patent-leather shoes, carries a cane and box of flowers. He puts hat on table just outside door c. before he sees GRACE.)*

*(GRACE, looking up, sees TOMMY first. DICK, seeing GRACE's gaze turned up stage, follows with a turn of the head, and as TOMMY comes down stage, turns slowly around facing TOMMY all the time.)*

*(TOMMY comes down to a level with DICK and GRACE, looks at them for a moment, then throws*

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*cane and flowers up stage and slaps DICK's face. GRACE screams. TOMMY starts over to speak to GRACE as DICK lands his right fist on TOMMY's jaw.*

*(TOMMY turns, grabs DICK. DICK grabs TOMMY, takes his coat tails and rips the coat all the way up the back. TOMMY breaks and pulls off the coat. DICK turns to quiet GRACE, who is calling for them not to fight. TOMMY comes back and kicks him on his seat. DICK turns—they struggle.)*

GRACE. *(Runs up to door c., calling)* Mother! Father! Somebody—come quick! *(She comes down c., calling)* Don't fight—you're killing each other!

DICK. *(Has turned TOMMY around so that his arms are pinned behind him)* It's all right, Grace. I've got him! *(At this TOMMY stamps on his foot. They break. TOMMY goes L. a few steps, then back to DICK—they clinch. DICK throws TOMMY up stage to floor, jumps on top of him. GRACE pounds on DICK's back, trying to separate them. They still keep at it; she looks around, sees vase, goes and gets it.)*

GRACE. I'll stop you! *(She throws vase to hit DICK; it goes over his head and hits TOMMY, who goes limp. GRACE screams.)*

DICK. *(Rises)* Now see what you've done!

GRACE. Oh, Tommy, darling! *(Kneels by him.)*

DICK. He deserved what he got! *(Goes out calling)* I'll get the Doctor. Doctor! Doctor! Come quick—Tommy's hurt! *(Doctor enters, meeting DICK, who exits past him. Doctor goes to TOMMY and examines him. GRACE is kneeling beside him.)*

GRACE. Oh, Uncle Myron, I think I've killed him! Don't let him die—please!

DR. ANDERSON. He won't die, Grace. How did it happen?

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GRACE. I hit him with a vase——

DR. ANDERSON. What!

GRACE. I aimed it at Dick! I thought Dick was killing him.

DR. ANDERSON. I see. If you'll get my bag, Grace—it's in my office. (*GRACE rushes off c. TOMMY comes to and takes in his surroundings. Doctor helps him up and seats him on settee l. TOMMY carries a fine black eye.*)

TOMMY. Where's Loring?

DR. ANDERSON. Gone.

TOMMY. He coming back?

DR. ANDERSON. No.

TOMMY. Thank God for that! (*GRACE enters with bag.*)

DR. ANDERSON. You'll be all right in a minute.

TOMMY. (*Trying to stand, as he sees GRACE coming down c.*) I am all right now. (*Sways—GRACE and the Doctor get him seated again.*)

DR. ANDERSON. You sit still till I fix you up. (*He reaches in bag for cotton and antiseptic.*)

GRACE. (*Very timidly*) Does it hurt?

TOMMY. (*Gives her one look*) It does, but I've been hurt so much lately that I don't mind it as much as I might.

DR. ANDERSON. Grace, will you get some water and a cloth—a napkin will do. (*GRACE goes out l.*) Don't talk that way to her, Tommy. Grace feels pretty bad about this.

TOMMY. I hope she does. (*Doctor is now putting some antiseptic on TOMMY's head.*) That fellow Loring hits an awful blow, Doctor.

DR. ANDERSON. Loring didn't hit you there.

TOMMY. Well, it's all swollen——

DR. ANDERSON. Yes, and cut!

TOMMY. And bleeding. I didn't just break out that way, did I?

DR. ANDERSON. Oh, no, you were hit! (*Goes to bag, fixes gauze pad for TOMMY's eye.*)

TOMMY. I thought so.

DR. ANDERSON. With a vase.

TOMMY. Is that all? It felt like a safe.

DR. ANDERSON. Grace threw it!

TOMMY. (*Looks at Doctor*) She still loves me, then.

DR. ANDERSON. She thought Loring was getting the better of you.

TOMMY. I see—she wanted to make sure. I knew I was wrong to come back here with you, Doctor—but you said it was the time for me to see her—that there'd be nobody home, and she'd fall on my neck. You said that, didn't you?

DR. ANDERSON. Yes, Tommy, I said that.

TOMMY. You had the situation diagnosed all wrong, Doctor. (*GRACE enters with basin of water and cloth.*)

GRACE. Here, Uncle.

DR. ANDERSON. Thank you, dear. (*Puts pan•on table, wets end of the napkin and washes TOMMY's eye, then goes through bag for scissors and adhesive plaster.*) Now, Grace, if you'll help me here—hold Tommy's head that way so I can see. (*GRACE makes a movement to help.*)

TOMMY. I can hold my own head, thank you. (*Takes his head in his hands.*)

DR. ANDERSON. That's all right, but I want Grace to hold this adhesive plaster so I can cut it. (*Cuts plaster—GRACE holds it. Puts pad on TOMMY's eye.*) There, this will be fine. After the head stops aching, Tommy, you'll be all right.

GRACE. Then that's all you want of me? (*She crosses up R.C.*)

TOMMY. (*Crosses up to her C.*) Just one moment, please. (*GRACE stops by chair R.C.*) There's

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something I'd like to say to you, if I may—it won't take up much of your time.

GRACE. Well?

TOMMY. Contrary to the opinions of master minds, I happened to guess certain facts about a railroad. I have a check here which I think you are entitled to. (*Offers check.*)

GRACE. That's very generous of you, but I don't want your money.

TOMMY. I shall give it to the Doctor if you don't take it.

GRACE. I won't touch it.

TOMMY. Will you see that Mr. Livingston gets that, Doctor? (*Doctor takes check. TOMMY crosses c., gets coat from floor, puts it on, crosses to GRACE.*) Good-bye! (*He starts up for box and cane.*)

GRACE. Good-bye!

DR. ANDERSON. Aren't you going to say good-bye to me?

TOMMY. Good-bye, Doctor. (*Crossing down to Doctor and shaking hands.*)

DR. ANDERSON. Before you go, Tommy, there's one question I'd like you to answer.

TOMMY. What is it, Doctor?

DR. ANDERSON. What would you rather be than anything in the world?

TOMMY. (*After a moment's thought*) Single!

DR. ANDERSON. I don't believe you mean that, Tommy. I know you love Grace, and you've passed the worst time.

GRACE. (*Going to stool, sits*) I have passed the worst time I have ever had.

DR. ANDERSON. (*Crossing to GRACE*) Will you please tell me, Grace, what it was all about?

GRACE. Yes, I will! He was downright brutal to me!

TOMMY. Brutal? Why do you say that to the Doctor?

GRACE. Because you were! I have marks on my arms yet where you held me.

DR. ANDERSON. What did you do that for, Tommy?

TOMMY. She tried to leave the house at nine o'clock at night.

DR. ANDERSON. (*To GRACE*) Is that true, Grace?

GRACE. Yes—after he talked to me so I couldn't stand it any longer. (*TOMMY crosses to settee and sits.*)

DR. ANDERSON. And you were leaving for good?

GRACE. Yes.

DR. ANDERSON. And he grabbed you and held you?

GRACE. Yes, he did.

DR. ANDERSON. Well, some women would think that flattering.

GRACE. Well, I don't!

DR. ANDERSON. Why, Gracie! Tommy talked of you the whole time at the hospital, and didn't want to live unless you came back to him.

TOMMY. That's when I was delirious.

DR. ANDERSON. No, you weren't—(*Crosses to c.*)—and Tommy, when Grace heard you'd been sick, she nearly tore the timetable looking up the first train that would take her back to you.

GRACE. Uncle—

DR. ANDERSON. Yes, you did, and you called yourself names and said you were ashamed of yourself.

GRACE. But I—won't—

DR. ANDERSON. Stop it, Grace!

TOMMY. There isn't one chance in the world—

DR. ANDERSON. Shut up, Tommy! (*TOMMY subsides.*) You two are just suffering from matrimonial measles, troubles that look terrible but don't amount to anything. Everybody has them, and, like

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measles, it's better to have them young and get over them. Years from now you're either going to laugh at this or cry over it. If you let it take you apart, you're going to cry—so let's laugh at it. What do you say, Gracie? (*GRACE turns away.*) How about you, Tommy? (*TOMMY puts up his hand—"never again."*) And, Tommy, you'll want to be around to see your baby!

TOMMY. (*Looks at Doctor*) No!

DR. ANDERSON. Don't look so scared—it's happened before.

TOMMY. I know—but not to me. (*Rises, crosses to GRACE.*) Is it true? (*GRACE bows her head.*) Forgive me? (*GRACE looks at him, puts her arms around him.*) I hope he's going to like us!

THE END

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## **PURE AS THE DRIVEN SNOW; OR A WORKING GIRL'S SECRET**

Comedy mellow drammer. 3 acts. By Paul Loomis.  
5 males, 8 females (extras if desired). Interior. Modern costumes.

Never has an audience seen a more persecuted heroine than Purity Dean; a more fiercely moustached rogue than Mortimer Frothingham; or a nobler hero than Leander Longfellow who works in a pickle factory. Purity and Leander, of course, are in love, but Mortimer would press his attentions on the unwilling Purity and win her by fair means or foul. He institutes a campaign of villainy which includes locking Leander in a room with a time bomb. But to Mortimer's complete confusion the young lovers win through. Purity turns out to be an heiress, and the final curtains sees her resting her fair head on Leander's broad and manly bosom. This is written in the old-time melodrama style, combining the best situations from all of them, but it is played in modern costumes.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

## **LAVENDER AND OLD LACE**

Comedy-drama. 3 acts. By Rose Warner. 4 males, 6 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

Mary Ainslie, a gracious little New England lady, has become a legend because of her lavender, old laces, and the lighted lamps burning brightly in her attic window. Staying with her is Ruth Thorne, a neighbor's niece. Carl Winfield, a young newspaperman, comes to the village with a letter of introduction to Ruth. They fall in love with each other, but their happiness is marred when Carl has an accident which blinds him. Mary steps forth to help with all her resources. In a scene that is gripping and filled with poignant beauty Mary Ainslie steps forth and reveals her reasons for having lived such a strange life. This is a play of inspirational force that is uplifting and skillfully written. It is a thoroughly modern portrait of present-day life with comic and dramatic scenes and a touch of heart-warming tenderness.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.



## **TISH**

Comedy. 3 acts. By Alice Chadwicke. 5 males, 8 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

Here are Mary Roberts Rinehart's most famous stories made into an hilarious play. Tish is a middle-aged spinster, blunt, outspoken, and entirely lovable. Tish with Lizzie and Aggie, her two boon companions, starts on a motor tour in the south-west. It ends somewhat abruptly when Tish drives the car through Luther Hopkins's plate glass window. This little incident starts a series of mad accidents through which Tish sails with flying colors. She tries to recover the money stolen from the hotel. She is mistaken for an international female spy. Whether she is trying to help Aggie recover her lost teeth or straighten out the tangled romances of the young couples Tish is on the spot getting people out of one difficulty and into another. Tish as a character and a play will delight your audiences. Following close upon the heels of her great successes "Anne of Green Gables" and "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine," Alice Chadwicke has scored another bullseye with "Tish." If you relish laughter, you simply mustn't miss "Tish."

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

## **FRECKLES**

Comedy-drama. 3 acts. By Rose Warner. 6 males, 8 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

Here is a spirited dramatization of the Gene Stratton-Porter novel which headed the list of best sellers for years. To the Duncan house in the Limberlost country comes Freckles, a lad who knows no other name. McLean is the operator of a large lumber mill and being hardpressed to find a man to guard his valuable trees, he hires Freckles for the job. In the camp are two men who plan to steal most of the trees, and they try to involve Freckles in their plans. In protecting McLean's interests Freckles almost loses his life, and in the end the mystery surrounding his birth is cleared up in a startling manner. Freckles is then free to marry the girl of his choice, Angel, whom he calls his "swamp angel." Smashing climaxes, fast action, and comedy make this an excellent play for schools.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

## MAN BITES DOG

Comedy. 3 acts. By Frederick Jackson. 6 males, 7 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

Mr. Crane has two daughters and a son who do not understand economy. When Carolla, who is going to marry Whitey, brings Corisande into the house to decorate for the wedding to the tune of some thousands, Crane decides to talk to Corisande and see if something can't be done about the extravagance. She tells him that he ought to turn the quarterly income over to the children and present his bills to them. Under these conditions they will find out what makes the financial wheel go around. He follows her suggestion. The result is a hopeless tangle, and the children are forced to call in Pritchley, the old standby in their father's office. He becomes their budget dictator after Crane has suddenly eloped with Corisande. When father comes home, he finds the wedding is going to take place in the greatest simplicity—not even any refreshments. So Mr. Crane steps back into the governing seat again, and the wedding comes off with the proper sort of celebration. This is an excellent comedy for high schools.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

## SORORITY HOUSE

Comedy. 3 acts. By Mary Coyle Chase. 7 males, 22 females, extras. 2 interiors. Modern costumes.

*Sorority House* is the story of Lew Wyckoff, small town flashily dressed, pool room owner, his daughter, Alice, and what happened to them during one brief period of rush week. Alice had worked for a year to come to college. An education was what she wanted. She knew the sororities were as far away from her as the stars. You had to have money, pull, pretty clothes to make one. One week and Alice had become like all the other freshman girls; frantic, crazed, hysterical. A sorority bid was the most important thing in the world—next to Bud Loomis, the college smoothie she had met and loved and would lose if she didn't "rate" that bid. To get it Alice turned her own life upside down and Lew's heart along with it. Without enrolling in one class she learned a lesson she would never forget—even in Bud's arms. And Lew—he learned something too—what all parents must someday learn, although he never did get on to the pronunciation of the Greek word which brought it about. *Sorority House* is released as a motion picture starring Anne Shirley.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

## BACHELOR BORN

Comedy. 3 acts. By Ian Hay. 11 males, 6 females.  
Interior. Modern costumes.

Produced with great success in New York and London. Charles Donkin, the gray-haired master of Red House, Marble-down School, is an amiable misogynist who is the object of veneration and fate's whim when he has suddenly dumped upon him three mischievous young ladies and their aunt, who have some vague sentimental claim on the old fellow's affections. The girls liven up the boys' school considerably; as a matter of fact, they play havoc with their fresh youth and gaiety. Since Donkin has quietly let promotions, etc., pass him by, the girls make it their business to enlist the help of the boys and bring the situation to the notice of the proper people. There are troubles along the way when a crusty headmaster, who is hated by all the boys, tries, out of fatuous malice, to get old Donkin sacked. Villainous though he is, he is unsuccessful, and the outcome of the rebellion is a successful one.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

## HANDY MAN

Comedy. 3 acts. By Tom Powers. 5 males, 5 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

The chief character is an old man, who is a mixture of Puck and Rip-Van-Winkle. The other characters are amusing too: Two lovable young Russians, Prince and Princess, assorted Americans, an oh-so-British butler, the mother and several extras. It concerns a father, who ran off from his wife and children years ago, grew rich in Mexican oil and sent the money back. Now, after twenty years as unseen guardian angel, he comes back as Handy Man to the family, and, by his philosophy, his knowledge of the world, his wisdom and his humor, straightens out the problems of the wise wife whom he has never fooled for one minute. Basically, it is a play about the different social strata. The Russians are the top, Mrs. Bruce is America's best, Handy's daughters and his interior-decorator son-in-law are the eternal climbers, his wife, the simple, sane, best-there-is-anywhere, and he, himself, as he says, the bottom of the social scale. Handy says: "The middle people are so busy trampin' on the bottom, so as to see over the top, they just tread water and stay in the same place without touching either one." It's a funny play.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

## YOUTH TAKES OVER

Comedy. 3 acts. By Betty Smith & Robert Finch.  
10 males, 17 females, extras. Interior. Modern costumes.

In the George Washington High School, Albert Williams is known as the seat of all trouble while all the gentlemanly virtues repose in Swinburne Jones. So Dr. Pierson, the new principal, tries out on Albert his theory of redemption through responsibility. He appoints him President of the League for Young Citizens. Forced to raise money for the League Albert organizes a carnival. The confusion which results provides considerable hilarity and an uncomfortable time for the irrepressible Albert. There are splendid acting parts including typical students and teachers, and the play has a warm and appealing humanness. There are splendid acting parts such as Snooky Phipps who is trying desperately to grow up, Big Ethel who writes her own excuses, and Swinburne Jones, the boy you love to hate.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.

## JANEY'S ONE-TRACK MIND

Comedy. 3 acts. By Dorothy Bennett & Link Han-  
nah. 6 males, 11 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

The leading character is Janey Browne, a sweetly serious-minded young girl who has just finished high school and is trying to find a place for herself in the grown-up world. Afraid a college education will be too much of a drain on her family's resources, she has come to live with her older brother and his wife while she seeks a job in the nearby big city. Having failed to find one, she is just about driven to the conclusion that marriage to a prosperous man is the best solution to her life, and goes seriously to work to fit herself for the husband-hunt by taking lessons in glamour. Made to order for high-school-age production, this play offers excellent parts for eight girls and three boys of teen age (extra girls can be used in the two second-act scenes), and for three young men and two young women in their twenties, as well as one middle-aged woman. Only one living-room set is required, no elaborate props or staging effects are involved, and evening clothes are optional in the party scenes.

(Royalty, \$25.00.) Price, 75 cents.



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